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Kashmir govt quits in disgust

SRINAGAR, Jan 19 (Agencies): The embattled government of Indian Kashmir, widely accused of incompetence in face of a mounting secessionist campaign, resigned today, saying it was "unable to carry out its duties".

Farooq Abdullah, who quit as chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state yesterday, blasted the new home (interior) minister in Delhi.

Abdullah accused Minister Mufi Mohammed Sayeed, a Kashmiri, of undermining his government out of frustration at his own failure to become leader of the state.

"He sided with the anti-national and communal elements who were responsible for destabilising the government," Abdullah said in a lengthy statement.

Sayeed has called Abdullah's government incompetent, a view widely held in the new administration of Prime Minister Vithwanath Pratap Singh.

Many Kashmiris blame alleged neglect of development by Abdullah and his allies in Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party, beaten in last November's elections, for the rapid growth of the secessionist movement over the last 18 months.

Abdullah said the immediate cause of his resignation was the appointment of Jagmohan as state governor. Jagmohan, fired by Rajiv last July after five years in the job, was brought back today. He immediately declared governor's rule, under which he can govern on Delhi's behalf for a minimum of six months.

Jagmohan, speaking in the state's winter capital of Jammu, said he would be like "a nursing orderly serving the patient with compassion" in an effort to end the secessionist campaign of bombs, assassinations and violent general strikes.

"We have no option but to resign on the appointment of Jagmohan," said Abdullah. He earlier accused Jagmohan of playing partisan politics during his earlier term in office.

Abdullah's worst crisis was in December when the Janmukh and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) kidnapped Sayeed's daughter. She was released five days later in exchange for five JKLF members.

In Pakistan, JKLF rebel leader Amanullah Khan called Jagmohan a "savage" and warned New Delhi that his supporters could strike at Indian interests anywhere in the world.

"We are spread in four continents where we can retaliate quite effectively," Khan told reporters. "The Indians know very well we mean business."

Meeting of former deputies with govt urged

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (AP): An outspoken lawyer yesterday proposed a meeting between Kuwait's leadership and former parliamentarians who are demanding the return of the country's Parliament.

"It is high time for holding an enlarged meeting between the official political leadership and deputies who pioneered the weekly meetings at diwanis to press their demands for the revival of parliamentary life," wrote Mohammed Musaed Al Saleh on the front page of a local daily.

Al Saleh praised the attitude of security men at this last diwaniya at the house of Faisal Al Sane in the Kuwait suburb of Kaifan. "The attitude of policemen was praised by all participants in the rally. We hope that such spirit will continue."

HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah has been making statements of reassurance that the Kuwaiti leadership believes in democracy, but that it wants to avoid a recurrence of the government-Parliament crises by searching for an alternative formula for parliamentary life.

Commenting on the remarks of the Crown Prince, Al Saleh wrote: "Until when will such weekly meetings continue... and when will the political leadership find a formula that enables Kuwait to avoid a third crisis?"

Al Saleh said that the proposed meeting between the leadership and former deputies could be held at the premises of the dissolved Assembly.

"Leaders of the West and East have met at the Malta conference and decided, among other things, to stop the cold war. Is there any difficulty that prevents the sons of the same people both governors and governed, to meet for the sake of a noble target, namely the people's participation (in the governing process)?" he asked.



Fighting it out
At top, Azeri women, one holding a picture of her son, mourn the victims of the clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and a bottom, Armenian activists armed with rocket-propelled grenades shelter behind a wall in the border village of Yekhaskavan, southern Armenia, before launching a new attack on Azeri snipers from neighbouring Nakhichevan who killed two Armenians and injured another 14 in an overnight raid. (Reuters wirephoto)

Battles raging in Soviet south

Party loses control; Afghan veterans recruited

MOSCOW, Jan 19, (Agencies): A battle raged today in the Armenian border town of Yeratskh after 300 armed Azeris crossed into the neighbouring republic, highlighting Soviet security forces' inability to halt a wave of ethnic bloodshed.

Reporters from the region said fighting continued after a big "We control the situation all over the republic. Our checkpoints are on duty on all roads... the absolute majority of the people follow the orders of the Popular Front," Foad Agayev, a spokesman for the nationalist movement declared.

The Soviet Interior Ministry raised the death toll to 72 in the past week of fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in which Soviet Army forces sent to try to keep the peace have also suffered casualties.

"The party and Soviet organs in their present forms do not enjoy any authority and are unable to influence the events to the slightest degree," Agayev told Reuters.

A Soviet official in Moscow who asked not to be named agreed, saying: "I think we have to recognise that the Popular Front is effectively in power most of Azerbaijan."

A Soviet security official said activists in Azerbaijan's second city, Gyandzha (formerly Kirovobad), were recruiting veterans of the Afghan campaign to join the battle against Armenians.

In the Azeri capital of Baku, party headquarters were surrounded for the third day running by thousands of people demanding the resignation of the republic's communist leadership and the withdrawal of Soviet Army troops, Baku radio said.

The troops, sent in this week to help interior Ministry forces restore order, have for the most part been hemmed in by militant Azeris and many are trapped in their barracks.

As night fell in Baku, a spokesman for the militant self-styled "council of national defence" linked to the Popular Front said they had been given an ultimatum by the republic's communist chiefs to let the troops through.

Army commanders have pledged to lead their troops into the centre of Baku — some of the worst killing of the last week — despite blockades set up around the city.

The Council of National Defence spokesman told Reuters by telephone from Baku that council leaders had been told by the party officials "resolute action" would be taken unless the blockades were moved this week.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev told a Kremlin meeting that Moscow would do all in its power to restore order. He blamed the turmoil on what he called extremists, adventurers and Muslim fundamentalists who wanted to undermine his reforms.

Gorbachev said today that Azerbaijan extremists have called for the republic to secede and become an Islamic state but vowed he would not allow the situation to deteriorate, the official Tass news agency said.

Gorbachev told a meeting of workers, farmers and engineers in the Kremlin that the Transcaucasus region is still tense and that there are clashes, pogroms, attempts to seize weapons, Tass said.

Thousands of Soviet Azeris crossed into Iran today to take part in Muslim mass prayers, the Iranian news agency Iran reported.

It said the Azeris, including many children and elderly people, crossed the border near Bilehavar.

Iranians arming Azeris

MOSCOW, Jan 19, (Reuters): Iranian Muslim Azeris are supplying weapons and political support to Soviet counterparts engaged in a bloody struggle with rival Christian Armenians, newspaper reports from the Transcaucasus region said.

The government daily Izvestia said today that thousands of predominantly Shiite Azeris had crossed in both directions around the Nakhichevan and Dzhabul districts in Soviet Azerbaijan near Iran's border.

It said postmen bridges had been set up across the Araks river that serves as the formal frontier, adding there was considerable traffic in weapons.

"There is information about the preparation for transfer across the border of a large consignment of arms and ammunition," it said.

And it said meetings between the two groups had expressed support for Azerbaijan claims to complete control over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The predominantly Armenian enclave is legally part of Azerbaijan, and more than 180 people have died in clashes between the two groups in the last two years.

"There were calls for unification and for the liberation of Nagorno-Karabakh," Izvestia said.

The Iranian news agency Iran said thousands of Azeris had crossed into Iran today to take part in Muslim prayers.

In remarks at the Kremlin today, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev blamed extremists, adventurers and Muslim fundamentalists for violence this month in the Soviet south that has claimed at least 72 lives.

Tehran radio said thousands of Soviet Azeris gathered on the banks of the Araks river opposite the Iranian town of Jolfa, exchanging Islamic slogans with a crowd on the Iranian side.

It Turkey feels a close affinity for the Azerbaijan people and is anxiously watching their conflict with Armenians just across the Soviet border, Foreign Minister Mesut Yilmaz was quoted today as saying.



Torture cell
The Shiite Muslim Amal militia on Thursday displayed an underground prison where it said US Marine Col William Higgins was briefly held before his reported death.

Melhim Qanso, Amal's spokesman in south Lebanon, said the seven-cell prison, dug behind a car painting shop in this southern village, was used by the pro-Iranian Hezbollah "to hold innocent victims, including foreign hostages."

"Higgins was held here for three days shortly after his abduction," Qanso told Reuters.

Higgins, who headed a UN observer team in south Lebanon, was kidnapped near the southern port of Tyre Feb 17, 1983. The Organisation of the Oppressed on Earth claimed it killed him last July after Israel kidnapped a Hezbollah Sheikh.

Picture shows an Amal official opening a thick iron door that leads to the underground prison. (Reuters wirephoto)

Manila snap polls denied

Governor defies Aquino

MANILA, Jan 19, (UPI): A top adviser of US President George Bush today dismissed speculation he came to Manila on an unannounced visit to urge President Corason Aquino to call a snap election to head off another coup attempt.

Robert Gates, assistant to the President and deputy adviser for National Security Affairs, met with Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos for almost two hours at the close of a 24-hour visit to Manila.

Gates later told reporters he conveyed to Aquino the same message he gave to Ramos in a meeting last afternoon. He said the message was "President Bush's strong commitment to democracy in the Philippines and to constitutional process."

He described Ramos, a West Point-trained general and former armed forces chief, as "a friend of long standing and someone who is also known to be a strong friend of constitutional process here in the Philippines."

Gates brushed aside speculation that he came to urge Aquino to call a snap election to defuse another attempt by militant soldiers seeking Aquino's overthrow.

"Not at all," Gates said.

Aquino was swept to power in February 1986 in a civilian-backed military revolt that followed a fraud-marred balloting the late former President Ferdinand Marcos called under pressure from the Reagan administration.

Last December, President Bush provided loyalist forces air cover to quell a coup attempt, the sixth and strongest challenge to Aquino. At least 119 people died in the uprising by soldiers accusing Aquino of inefficiency and corruption.

Coup leaders and about 1,000 followers are still at large and threaten to mount another rebellion.

Ramos said he appealed to Gates to speed up delivery of military aid to the Philippines and that the US adviser "he will do all he can."

Gates also told reporters the State Department welcomes the reported Soviet withdrawal from the former US naval base at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam of some naval and air force units as a "positive" move. But he said the pullout will not affect upcoming talks on the future of key US installations in the Philippines.

The Philippines hosts Clark Air Base and the Subic Bay naval complex — oldest and largest overseas US facilities.

Prosecutors rule out plea-bargaining with Imelda

MANILA, Jan 19, (AP): US prosecutors have ruled out further plea-bargaining with Imelda Marcos after the former first lady failed to respond to Washington's deadline, Senate President Jovito Salonga said yesterday.

Salonga told reporters US prosecutors informed him that Imelda's lawyers were to have responded to a plea-bargaining offer by last Monday but failed to do so.

Salonga quoted US prosecutor Charles Labella as telling him there would be no further discussions and that Imelda would go on trial March 13 in US district court in Manhattan.

"As a result of their failure to meet the deadline, Labella has sent a letter to the lawyers of Imelda that there would henceforth be no more discussions for plea-bargaining," Salonga said.

Salonga said Labella estimated the trial would last two to three months.

Imelda faces racketeering charges in connection with the alleged embezzlement of millions of dollars in Philippine funds during the 20-year rule of her late husband, Ferdinand.

Imelda has pleaded innocent to the charges.

NEWSWATCH

Bhagwan Rajneesh dies: Bhagwan Rajneesh, a controversial Indian guru who preached free sex and had a luxurious lifestyle, died of a heart attack today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said.

The agency, quoting a statement issued by Rajneesh's physician, said the 58-year-old mystic, expelled from the United States in 1985, died of a heart attack on his commune at Poonah, near Bombay.

Rajneesh, who called himself bhagwan or god, had set up a commune named after himself and spread over 64,000 acres (26,000 hectares) in Portland, Oregon, before he was expelled for arranging sham marriages.

He paid a fine of \$400,000 and left the United States for good.

The guru, who had thousands of followers in India and overseas, owned nearly 100 Rolls Royce cars in the United States. (Reuters)

Sexual fantasies from dental drug: Some women who claim to have been sexually abused by their dentists may actually be suffering from fantasies induced by the drugs used to relax patients, the Lancet medical journal reported today.

"The allegation may be well-founded — such behaviour is not unknown — but it may equally well be a fantasy induced by the drug," said an article by Diana Brabham, a London barrister specialising in medical cases.

Italian lover's frustration: A spurned Latin lover plastered walls in the centre of Naples with nude photos of his ex-girlfriend, giving her name and offering sex with her for 100,000 lire (\$30), police said today.

They said the girl, who reported her former boyfriend to police, claimed that he had previously tried to get her back by threatening her with a pistol and by bombarding her new boyfriend with anonymous phone calls and demands for money. (Reuters)

Envoy with Aids refused treatment: Doctors at one of India's most prestigious hospitals refused to perform surgery on an African ambassador after he tested positive for Aids, the Times of India newspaper reported today.

The unnamed diplomat was admitted Jan 2 to the state-run All-India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) in New Delhi for the treatment of cancer, internal bleeding and low blood pressure and was slated for surgery Jan 15, the newspaper said.

Senior Japan politician dies: Tomisaburo Hashimoto, a powerful figure in Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party who was implicated in the Lockheed payoff scandal, died of pneumonia.

Prices may jump: Foodstuff and consumer products' costs are expected to jump by as much as 33 per cent in the next few months, according to market sources. (See Page 9)

Weather

RATHER Cold weather with light to moderate northwesterly wind and some clouds will appear.

State of sea: Slight to moderate

High water: 6:05 am, 5:41 pm

Low water: 11:20 am

Sunrise: 6:43 am

Sunset: 5:15 pm

Maximum temperatures recorded:

Kuwait: 15°C/59°F

Abu Dhabi: 15°C/59°F

Minimum temperatures recorded:

Kuwait: 7°C/45°F

Abu Dhabi: 8°C/46°F

Fallaka: 6°C/43°F

Maximum temperatures expected:

Kuwait: 14°C/57°F

Abu Dhabi: 12°C/54°F

Fallaka: 13°C/55°F

Minimum humidity recorded:

Kuwait: 70 per cent

Abu Dhabi: 68 per cent

Fallaka: 72 per cent



Hussein held
Leading Palestinian activist Faisal Hussein was arrested by Israeli police, a day after court documents named him as a financier of militants slaying an Arab uprising in the occupied territories. (Reuters wirephoto)

Lanka dubs Amnesty terrorist

COLOMBO, Jan 19, (AP): Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne yesterday called Amnesty International a terrorist organisation and accused the London-based human rights group of trying to destabilise his country.

Wijeratne, who also is deputy defence minister, said at his weekly news briefing: "Quote me. I declare Amnesty International another terrorist organisation cloaked in sheep's clothing which goes into countries to destabilise democratic government."

In London, Amnesty International denied the allegation. "Amnesty International stands for human rights, not terror. We do not support or fund the activities of opposition groups anywhere in the world," said the London-based organisation, which campaigns worldwide for the release of non-violent political prisoners and the abolition of torture and capital punishment.

Amnesty International said it had given relief assistance over many years to victims of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, including recent legal work on behalf of victims of alleged human rights abuses.

This has been done through the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, which took on such work after several lawyers had been killed or threatened with death because they undertook these cases, the statement said.

"Support for legal assistance in human rights cases has nothing to do with funding terrorism," it said. It rejected a suggestion that it had advised foreign governments to discontinue aid to Sri Lanka, saying it was its policy never to call for aid or trade boycotts.

Sri Lanka's top opposition leader, Srimavo Bandaranaike, on Wednesday asked Western nations to pressure the Colombo government into stopping what she described as human rights violations.

"Western nations should send a team to Sri Lanka to investigate violations of democratic and human rights," Mrs Bandaranaike said in a speech to a press group.

Bandaranaike, a former prime minister, said she was not in favour of economic sanctions because it may cause hardship for Sri Lanka's 16 million people.

A junior government minister today accused the opposition parties of trying to sabotage the government's efforts to bring back normalcy to this war-torn country.

Lower living standards to keep up aid, US told

MANILA, Jan 19, (Reuters): Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus said yesterday the United States should consider reducing its standard of living to meet its foreign aid pledges to allies, including the Philippines.

Manglapus blasted a proposal by US Senator Bob Dole for five per cent cuts in US aid to Israel, Egypt, the Philip-

pines, Turkey and Pakistan to enable Washington to help Panama and the new democracies in Eastern Europe.

"The US should re-arrange its domestic priorities which may result in, maybe, some lowering of standards in some areas of American life. I mean maybe welfare ... public works," Manglapus told a news conference.

Dole, the Senate Republican minority leader, made the proposal in an article in the New York Times.

"To me, it boils down to this: are big gains for freedom worth a small cut in few huge foreign aid programmes? I say yes," Dole said.

Washington's foreign aid bill this year earmarks \$14.6 billion in overseas

assistance. Cuts proposed by Dole would make \$330 million available for other countries.

President Corason Aquino warned on Tuesday that US failure to live up to aid pledges could damage prospects for a new peace agreement. Washington's lease on its Philippine bases expires in 1991 and the two countries are to hold

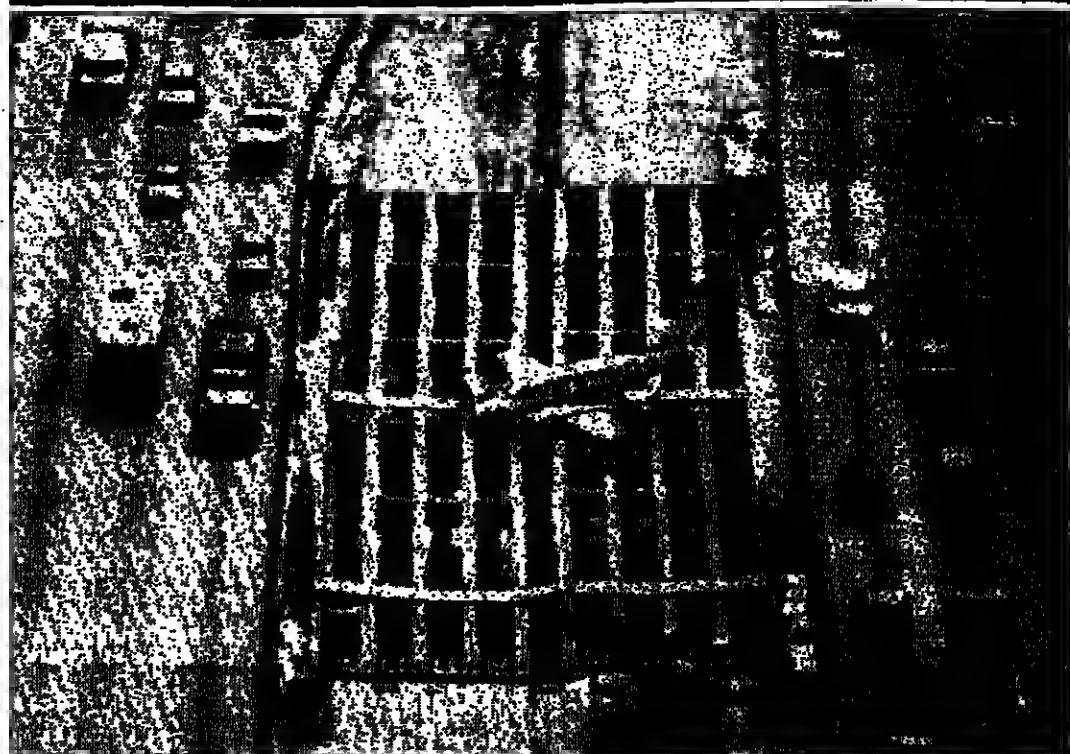
exploratory talks in March or April on a possible new accord.

"It is time for the American people and the American leaders to reorganise their priorities," Manglapus declared.

The Philippines, which restored democracy in 1986 after toppling the late president Ferdinand Marcos in a revolt was "one of the new

democracies, if not the leading model for new democracies," Manglapus said.

"When Bob Dole said supporting freedom is not free, we feel that we would like to remind everyone, we have been at the frontline of America's defence here for free since 1903," he said.



Good enough for landing

A Cessna 404 rests on the median of an overpass under construction on Interstate 95 in Boca Raton. The plane, flying from Wilmington to Fort Lauderdale, made a crash landing on the median after manoeuvring under power lines that cross the highway. (Reuters wirephoto)

dale made a crash landing on the median after manoeuvring under power lines that cross the highway. (Reuters wirephoto)

Filipino communists launch offensive

Renegade officers arrested

MANILA, Jan 19, (AP): Intelligence agents conducted separate raids today and arrested two renegade officers involved in last month's failed coup, the military reported.

The arrests brought to three the number of wanted leaders of the Dec 1-7 failed putsch taken into custody in the last three days.

Authorities detained cashiered Capt Pacifico Avenida without incident in near a suburban Manila shopping area, said a Philippine Constabulary spokesman. Lt Col Crisostomo Maralit.

He said there had been a \$22,200 reward out for his capture. Avenida was dismissed from the service for involvement in a previous coup attempt and has been in hiding since. The officer was being questioned about last month's coup attempt, Maralit said.

Hours earlier, operatives arrested renegade Capt Rogelio Seradoy in a soldier's housing area at Villamor air base, the Philippine Air Force headquarters located near Manila, said camp Commander Col Manuel Orale.

Seradoy was under arrest and undergoing trial in connection with the Aug 28 coup attempt when he escaped at the height of last month's attempt.

On Wednesday, soldiers arrested former Lt Cmdr Jaime Lucas inside a girlfriend's apartment in suburban Mandaluyong, the military reported.

Lucas, who carried a \$44,500 reward for his capture, suffered a sprained ankle when he jumped from the second floor of the house.

Communist rebels have launched a planned 18-month military offensive that includes the assassination of American servicemen and attacks on farms owned by foreign multinational corporations, a captured document says.

France vows to aid Third World

NEW DELHI, Jan 19, (Agencies): France yesterday pledged to continue its financial commitments to developing countries, despite demands from a changing Eastern Europe.

An Indian government spokesman said the assurance by a senior French Foreign Ministry official, Edwige Avice, was made during an hour-long meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

"In spite of the changes in Eastern Europe, there will be no change in France's commitment for economic exchanges with and assistance to developing countries," said spokesman Aftab Seth.

Mrs. Avice, the minister delegate for foreign affairs, is part of a 10-member delegation accompanying French Prime Minister Michel Rocard and his wife, Michelle, who arrived in New Delhi earlier yesterday. The couple were welcomed by Prime Minister V.P. Singh at the red-carpeted foreground of the presidential palace.

The issue of assistance to the developing countries also was covered separately at a meeting between the two prime ministers, Seth said.

He said Rocard also held discussions with Singh on increasing co-operation between the two countries in the fields of defence, atomic energy and space science.

Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the "excellent state of Indo-French relations," he said.

Officials from the two countries held separate discussions on the proposed sale of French nuclear power plants to India and prospects for increasing bilateral trade, he said.

The talks are scheduled to continue today. Rocard is the first Western leader to visit India since Singh took office Dec 2.

"I am proud to have the occasion to come to India," Rocard told reporters. "It is the beginning of a new step in our relations."

Later, Rocard and Singh presided over the closing ceremonies of a year-long French cultural festival in India.

"We wanted to get to know each other better by peaceful means, by means of a thousand different kinds of events. The truth is we need to get to know you better," Rocard said at the function.

The ceremonies ended with a choral and orchestral concert by the youth orchestra of France, conducted by Arthur Omban, the music director of the choir of the Paris Orchestra.

Rocard is a call on President Ramaswamy Venkatarayanan before leaving for Bangkok.

Rocard said today his government and India are worried the political turmoil in the Soviet Union as the "safety of the planet" depends on how Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev deals with the challenges.

He also said France has no objections to an Australian plan for a UN-supervised settlement to the Cambodian conflict, but added that it would provide only a partial solution.

Rocard's comments on Cambodia and his expression of concern over the strike in the Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia came during the news conference.

He said that he and Singh considered the situation in the Soviet Union during a 45-minute one-on-one meeting held.

8 Indian states will go to polls

Major test for Singh

By Thomas Abraham
Arab Times correspondent

NEW DELHI, Jan 19: Eight states and the union territory of Pondicherry in India go to polls on Feb 27 to elect new legislative assemblies, just three months after the general elections of November brought about the ouster of the Rajiv Gandhi government.

The date for the one-day poll was announced in Delhi yesterday by Chief Election Commissioner R.S.V. Peri Shastri, setting the stage for another major trial of strength between the ruling National Front led by Prime Minister V.P. Singh and the Congress headed by his predecessor Rajiv Gandhi.

The states where elections will be held are Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, and Rajasthan, besides Pondicherry. All of them are currently being ruled by the Congress and most of them are in the north, where the party got a severe drubbing in the November polls.

To that extent, the outcome of the February elections can be expected to have significant bearing on the national political scene.

Apart from being a verdict on the respective state governments, the elections will also provide some indication of the people's assessment of the National Front's performance in government so far.

The outcome of the elections will also show how the people in these states have reacted to the Congress' last-minute bid to sway the voters' minds through changes of chief ministers and various populist measures.

Shastri, however, did not announce dates for elections in Punjab and Delhi, because both are at present under president's rule and a decision about holding of elections can be taken only after a firm indication is received from the centre about revocation of president's rule. In Delhi, the government moreover, has not yet decided whether the metropolitan council would be replaced by a full-fledged legislative assembly.

Elections will also not be held to the 14 Lok Sabha seats from Assam. These could not be held in November because electoral rolls were not ready.

Dates for elections to the legislative assembly in Manipur, another north-eastern state, being held on Feb 12, had been announced earlier.

In all, some 213 million voters will be eligible to exercise their franchise to choose 1,589 representatives on Feb 27. According to the schedule announced by the election commission, the election notification will be issued on Jan 27. The last date for filing of nominations is Feb 3 and the scrutiny of papers will be held on Feb 5. The last date for withdrawal of candidatures is Feb 7. After the polling on Feb 27, the entire process of counting and announcement of results would be completed by March 3.

Polling will also be held on Feb 27 for three Lok Sabha constituencies — Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh, Palani in Tamil Nadu and Durgapur in West Bengal — where elections had been countermanded in November.

Elections will also be held on the same day in seven assembly constituencies — Rayachoti in Andhra Pradesh, Yanaganar and Mundargi in Karnataka, and Chandpur, Nampara, Sikan-drabad and Khekra in Uttar Pradesh — where, too, polling had been countermanded.

By-elections will be held on the same date for Thaneesar and Mehar assembly constituencies in Haryana, Haripad in Kerala, Laitumkhrah in Meghalaya, Alidpurduar, and Magnabat East, Ramnagar and Sonamukhi in West Bengal.

Author defends Quran in comics

'I'm a devout Muslim'

PARIS, Jan 19, (Reuters): A Tunisian-born author, denounced as a heretic for producing the first comic-strip version of the Holy Quran, says he is only a devout Muslim trying to spread the word of Islam.

Youssef Seddik, a bespectacled journalist turned scholar, said in an interview he has spent the last five years perfecting his colourful comic-strip tales of the stories told in the Muslim holy book to make them more accessible to children.

"The Quran is extremely difficult for children to understand. I want to make it more accessible. I'll be horrified if this becomes another Rushdie affair," he told Reuters.

In the last two weeks outraged Muslims in Tunisia, Algeria and Kuwait have labelled him the new Salman Rushdie and have demanded an international ban on the cartoons, produced in three hardback, olive-coloured volumes in Arabic and French.

The Indian-born Rushdie is still in hiding in Britain after Iran's late leader Ayatollah Khomeini condemned his novel, "The Satanic Verses," as blasphemous and sentenced him to death.

Under the strictest interpretation of Islam, figurative representation is forbidden and any tampering with the Quranic text, is sacrilegious.

Paris-based Seddik rejects criticisms angrily, insisting he is absolutely faithful to the holy



Seddik holds a copy of his comic book version of the Quran. (Reuters wirephoto)

text in his books, called "Tell Me a Story from the Quran."

"I thought I was doing good by choosing a sacred text like the Quran instead of a dubious work like the 'Thousand and One Nights,' whose erotic content many consider unsuitable for children," he said yesterday.

Tunisia's Supreme Islamic Council said this week a pictorial representation of the Quran was "an error and a heresy because it would distort the word of God."

The Algerian newspaper El Moudjahid said last week the publicity surrounding the comic-strip was a trap to entice Muslims into condemning it, so that anti-Muslim groups could then accuse them of intolerance.

Tribute to Poe

Stranger visits grave

BALTIMORE, Jan 19, (UPI): A stranger dressed in black upheld a 41-year tradition today visiting the grave of Edgar Allan Poe and leaving a bottle of cognac and three red roses in a birthday tribute to the author.

Jeff Jerome, curator of the Edgar Allan Poe House, said the stranger, wearing a black hat and black suit, arrived at 3 am "on the nose."

Of the six people celebrating Poe's 181st birthday, waiting near the grave at Westminster Hall, all six gave different descriptions of the stranger, who walked with a cane.

"I saw white hair and another person saw dark hair," Jerome said. "It appears a different person who was spotted in previous years, giving more credence to the theory it is a father and son tradition. Maybe the father has passed away or is too ill to continue."

The stranger put a half-full bottle of cognac and the three red roses at the base of Poe's grave, then knelt "as if to say a prayer," Jerome said.

"He put his hand on the tombstone. As he walked out he tipped his hat in the direction of the Poe grave. He was walking with a cane and hobbled down a set of steps," Jerome said.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Lecture: Postgraduate Study in Britain. Monday 22nd January

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PHONE: 2533204 / 2533227

Author of the Year award

Charles honoured

LONDON, Jan 19, (AP): The Prince of Wales, author of a best-selling book about architecture, was named Author of the Year at the British Book Awards yesterday.

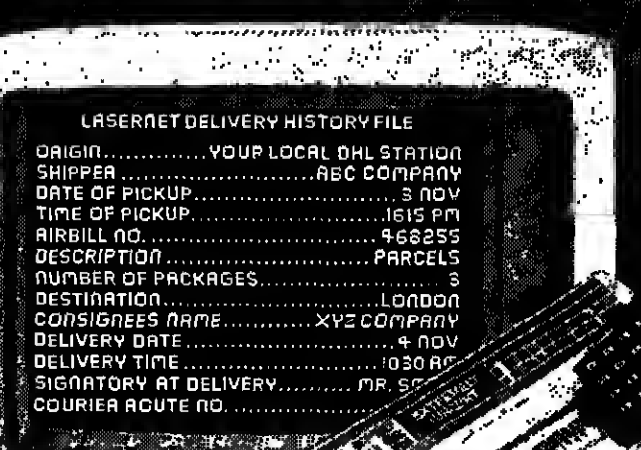
"A Vision of Britain," in which Prince Charles criticised much modern architecture, has been in the list of best-sellers since it was published last year.

American and Canadian editors of the book have sold very well. In the book, the prince said some modern architecture replaced the traditions and harmonies of the past with "Frankenstein monsters, devoid of character, alien and largely unloved except by the professors who have been concocting these horrors in their laboratories."

Charles, 41-year-old heir to the British throne, won the first author of the year award. It was accepted on his behalf by Christopher Martin, who produced a British Broadcasting Corp. documentary in which the prince guided viewers around some buildings he liked and many he didn't.

The book also led to an exhibition at London's Victoria and Albert Museum which attracted 45,000 visitors — the museum's most popular event in 1989.

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* GUARANTEE APPLIES TO THE ABOVE PLUS RYADH, JEDDAH, AL KHOBAR, YANBU, JUBAIL, BAHRAIN, ABU DHABI, DUBAI, SHARJAH, DOHA, MUSCAT



Bruce Springsteen and Diana Ross play during an all-star jam at Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction dinner in New York. (Reuters wirephoto).



The three remaining members of The Who, (left to right) John Entwistle, Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey, with their awards after being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in New York. (Reuters wirephoto).

Rock 'n' roll Hall of Fame

Induction ceremony

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): Paul Simon said he and Art Garfunkel would feel at home in the rock and roll Hall of Fame, noting that their relationship was rocky.

"We can join those other happy couples," he said at Wednesday night's induction ceremony. "Ike and Tina Turner, the Everly Brothers, Mick (Jagger) and Keith (Richards), Paul (McCartney) and all of the Beatles."

Despite their breakups, Simon called Garfunkel "my oldest and best friend" more than once during his speech at the annual black-tie dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

While Simon and others celebrated, one inductee cried. Hank Ballard, who wrote "The Twist," said he fell alone in accepting his award. He said his wife, who also served as his manager, was killed in a hit-and-run accident in New York three months ago.

"When she took me on four years ago, she swore she was going to take me back to the stars where I

used to be," he said. "It's tragic she's not here tonight with me."

Besides Ballard, and Simon and Garfunkel, the acts inducted were the four topes: The Who; Bobby Darin, who died in 1973, best known for "Splish Splash" and "Mack the Knife"; the four seasons; the Kinks; and the Platters.

One of the songwriting teams honoured, Gerry Goffin and Carole King, created their first hit "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" for the Shirelles, and followed it with "Up On the Roof," "Loco-Motion" and "Go Away Little Girl."

Brothers Brian and Eddie Holland and Lamont Dozier, a creative cornerstone of the Motown sound of the 1960s, were honoured for writing more than 70 top 10 hits. Three of their 20 No. 1 hits were "Reach Out I'll Be There," "You Keep Me Hangin' On" and "Sloop in the Name of Love."

Three performers inducted for their early influences on rock 'n' roll were Louis Armstrong, Charlie Christian and Ma Rainey.

Producer denies Ewok theft

CALGARY, Alberta, Jan 19, (Reuters): Hollywood filmmaker George Lucas denied in Canadian court yesterday that he stole the idea for the Ewok character in his 1983 movie Return Of The Jedi from a Calgary writer.

"The creator of the hit 'Star Wars' movie series acknowledged, however, that there were similarities between his furry little animals and those portrayed in a 1978 script by writer Dean Preston.

"They have fur and they walk on two feet and they wear skulls on their heads... they're both primitive and they live in the forest," Lucas told the federal court of Canada.

Lucas is defending himself against a 129-million-dollar copyright infringement suit filed against him by Preston.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), having its

headquarters in Baghdad, invites companies who wish to be included in the ESCWA vendor roster for such supplies as:

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Berry sues magazine

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan 19, (AP): Rock 'n' roll pioneer Chuck Berry says pictures of him in the nude with female companions were stolen, and he is suing the magazine that published them for \$10 million.

But the publisher of the magazine, High Society, said in New York Thursday that the pictures were purchased and the magazine has a signed release from the seller.

Berry considered the photos his private property, attorney Melvin Bell said Wednesday after he filed the lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court.

Berry, 63, said he had the photos taken because, "I've seen too many times when girls misused their relationship with fellas. I wanted something to show everything was merry-merry."

Berry and his companion are posing side by side in most of the photos. No sexual acts are depicted. Berry said the photos were stolen in September from his business office in St. Louis and he does not know who turned them over to High Society.

Dealing with kids my biggest problem : Anne

LONDON, Jan 19, (Reuters): Britain's Princess Anne, marking her 20th anniversary as president of the Children's Fund, made no apologies on Thursday for not being keen on kids.

Asked on Independent television news if she had accepted the job in 1970 because she wanted to work with youngsters, Queen Elizabeth II's daughter replied bluntly: "No... I don't regard children in that light at all. It was more the idea of what you could do for them, not actually working with them, which interested me."

Coffee: sex stimulant for oldies

ROYAL OAK, Michigan, Jan 19 (AP): Older couples who drink coffee appear to be more sexually active than elderly non-coffee drinkers, according to a new study.

In response to a survey, 62 per cent of married women 60 and older who drank coffee said they were sexually active. Forty per cent of women older than 60 who do not drink coffee said they were active. Among married men the same ages, 36

per cent of coffee drinkers said they sometimes were impotent, compared with 59 per cent of those who don't drink coffee.

The study in the January issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine did not give a margin of error or date for the survey of 744 Michigan residents done by Dr Ananias Diokno of William Beaumont Hospital in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak.

Diokno, attempting to explain the

results, said coffee stimulates the central nervous system and relaxes certain muscles. But he said it also was possible that people who drink coffee also happen to be "more liberal in their sexual behaviour."

"We want to pursue this and find out why there is this connection between sex and coffee," he said.

The study team did not ask participants whether they drank regular or decaffeinated

coffee or how much they drank, Diokno said.

Some researchers were sceptical of the findings.

"Oh, Lord help us, now they've linked coffee and sex," said Gail Kershner Riggs, associate director of restorative medicine at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine, who has done her own research on sex among elderly women.

Worse than Bangladesh

Harlem death alarm

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): Harlem should be declared a health disaster area, according to a doctor whose study found that a man in the New York neighbourhood has a worse chance of living past age 40 than one in poverty-stricken Bangladesh.

"We have a chronic disaster area right in front of our eyes that most people are not aware of," said Dr Harold P. Freeman, director of surgery at Harlem hospital.

The report published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine was compiled by Freeman, 56, and Dr Colin McCord, 61, who worked in Bangladesh between 1972 and 1980 and noticed after returning to the United States that the mortality rates were worse in Harlem.

The doctors reviewed records from 1979 to 1981 and found that the death rate among men under 65 in Harlem was the highest in New York and almost three times that of white US men under 65.

"It's a national disaster and a national disgrace," said McCord, attending surgeon at Harlem hospital.

McCord said no formal study has been done through the 1980s, but a review of records from 1980 to 1987 shows deaths continued to increase with the onset of AIDS, crack, homelessness and increased use of illegal drugs.

He said that during the seven-year stretch, deaths among those 25 to 45 years old rose 35 per cent in

Harlem. The findings of the formal study based on 1979 to 1981 figures stem from an analysis of New York's central Harlem health district, where 96 per cent of the population is black and 41 per cent live below the poverty line.

The researchers found that 2,095 men under 65 died in Harlem from 1979 to 1981. If the death rate in Harlem had been the same as for white men under 65 across the United States, the number of deaths would have been only a little more than one-third as high — 720. Among all Harlem residents, the death rate was more than 50 per cent higher than the death rate for all US whites, the researchers found.

To dramatize their figures, the researchers compared them with Bangladesh. By age 40, the life expectancy of men in Bangladesh begins to exceed that of Harlem men. In Bangladesh, 55 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women live to age 65. In Harlem, 40 per cent of men and 65 per cent of women live that long.

Freeman said the five-year survival rate of women who learn they have cancer in Harlem is 32 per cent, but it is 75 per cent for white women elsewhere in the United States.

He blamed the results on lack of education, poor access to health care, substandard housing, isolation, alienation, a tendency to live day to day and malnutrition.

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No impact on fat level

Powerless oat bran

BOSTON, Jan 19, (AP): Contrary to cereal ads and popular belief, oat bran does not lower cholesterol levels, according to a study that challenges one of the biggest food crazes of the 1980s. Critics were sceptical of the findings.

The new research concluded that people who eat lots of oat bran do indeed have less cholesterol in their blood, not because of any special powers of oat bran but because they eat less saturated fat and cholesterol.

"There really isn't any cholesterol-lowering property in oat bran," said Dr Frank M. Sacks, a co-author of the study. "Oat bran pretty much does the same as other cereal products."

Oat bran has been promoted as a health food largely because it is rich in soluble fibre. Several studies have suggested that this kind of fibre somehow removes cholesterol from the body.

But this latest study concluded that people's cholesterol levels dropped just as much when they ate food made with low-fibre white flour and cream of wheat, a hot creamed wheat cereal, as it did with heavy intake of oat bran, because fat consumption went down.

High amounts of saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet can raise blood cholesterol levels, leading to heart disease. But when people eat lots of grain products, they may be too full to eat their usual amounts of fatty foods.

The researchers said the lower fat and cholesterol consumption, not high fibre intake, entirely explained the drop in cholesterol seen in their study.

The study, conducted on 20 volunteers, most of them hospital dietitians, was directed by dietitian Janis F. Swain at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. It was published in yesterday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The volunteers ate seemingly identical muffins, meat loaf and casseroles for two six-week periods. During one period, the foods contained 100 grams, or 3-1/2 ounces, of oat bran per day, while during the other contained that much white flour or cream of wheat as a control.

The foods contained 800 to 1,000 calories a day. The volunteers could eat whatever else they wanted but had to keep track of what they ate and how much. On both the oat and non-oat regimens, their cholesterol levels were about seven per cent lower than before they went on the diets. Before the diets, they were eating 12 per cent of their daily calories in the form of saturated fat. This fell to 10 per cent while on the high-fibre diet and nine per cent on the low-fibre diet. Consumption of cholesterol dropped by one-third.

Using dietitians as test subjects meant the researchers had a healthy group who already largely followed recommended diets. Their cholesterol levels averaged 186.

Among the reports most widely cited in favour of oat bran was a study conducted by dietitian Linda van Horn at Northwestern University. It found that substituting oat bran for other carbohydrates in the diet lowered blood cholesterol levels by three per cent.

Her study attempted to keep fat consumption constant, and she said the latest work does not shake her conviction that oat bran and other forms of soluble fibre can lower cholesterol.

"With their small sample size and without the dietary control necessary to monitor the situation, I don't know what this means," she said.

At Quaker Oats Co., which stresses oat bran's benefits in its cereal ads, research scientist Fred Shinnick said the group studied was too small and healthy to show a pronounced effect of oat bran.

"There is a clear cholesterol-lowering effect when you use oatmeal or oat bran," he said. "We don't think one small study disproves the weight of the evidence that has been published over the past 25 years."

Dr William Castelli of the Framingham Heart Study, who urges people to start the day with a bowl of oatmeal, also was sceptical.

"I still think you will get some extra mileage if you include some soluble fibre in your breakfast cereal," he said. "I think there's other evidence around that suggests that."



Prego ponders a question during the trial. (Reuterswirephoto)

Doc's plight

Aids case to set precedent

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (Reuters): An Aids-contaminated needle left in a pile of hospital bedding may set a legal precedent if a jury believes the tragic tale now being told in a wood-paneled New York courtroom by a pale 32-year-old Argentine woman doctor.

Dr Veronica Prego says it was carelessness by hospital staff that led to her being pricked by the needle and contracting the killer disease.

Prego is suing the Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn and two physicians for \$175 million in state court, charging "wanton negligence."

Legal experts say the case is the first in the United States to pit a hospital worker against her employer and could set a precedent in judging the extent of negligence in cases where employees have accidentally contracted acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The doctor says she contracted the deadly disease by being pricked by the needle left in a pile of bedding by a hospital intern on Jan 12, 1983. The intern had drawn blood from an Aids patient as part of her duties working over 100 hours a week.

Hospital lawyers say Prego lied about how and when she was exposed to Aids and say she was a victim of her own carelessness.

Prego is also suing intern Joyce Fogel, who denies even being in the room at the time the blood was drawn.

At times choking back tears, Prego has recounted to a jury, in grim detail, the mental and physical anguish she suffered since learning in 1985 she tested positive for the HIV virus.

"I have seen many people sick with this disease," she said. "I have gone through a lot already. I can see what's coming."

And what do you see coming? "Infections, diseases, and eventually death," Prego replied solemnly. "Infections, diseases, and eventually death."

For five days, attorney Stanley Friedman, whose firm is getting \$400 an hour to defend the city in the lawsuit, has relentlessly cross-examined the doctor on how she was exposed to the disease in an attempt to destroy her story. He has also asked her intimate details about her sex life.

Prego's lawyers have accused Friedman of psychologically torturing the dying woman on the witness stand.

"He is trying to put Dr Prego on trial... to smear her... to trap her," Karten said.

To charges that Prego is lying, her attorney said: "She is dying. She has no motivation to lie here."

Friedman has charged she stuck herself a second time with a contaminated needle in 1985 when she was employed by the city.

Asbestos removal may be a waste: There is little evidence that asbestos is a major health risk outside the workplace, and routinely removing asbestos from schools and hospitals may be a big waste of money, a team of lung disease experts said on Thursday.

"I think it's grossly overdone. It's panic and fear and anxiety and many of the removals are unnecessary," said Dr J. Bernard Goe of the Yale University School of Medicine.

School boards, public officials and private property owners will spend billions of dollars in coming years to test for and remove asbestos from buildings, (Reuters).

Transplant rejection success: Researchers have prevented the rejection of transplanted organs by altering the immune system so that the organs don't appear to be foreign, a new study has found.

The technique has been used only in laboratory animals so far, but it promises to be a vast improvement over current methods of preventing organ rejection in humans, says one of the study's participants, Dr C. Garrison Fathman of Stanford University in California.

The success of heart, kidney and liver transplants is limited by the ability of researchers to suppress the body's defence — so they don't reject the organ — while leaving enough of those defences intact to prevent infections and cancer.

"It's trading one disease for another," Fathman said Wednesday at the American Heart Association's annual science writers' forum. (AP)

Researchers repair cut nerves: Damaged nerves do not grow back, but Swiss researchers said on Thursday that they were able to successfully regenerate cut nerves in rats through the use of a bioengineered drug.

The treatment raises the possibility of new clinical methods to repair damaged nerves, doctors said.

Normally, interrupted fibres in the central nervous system do not regrow by more than an initial sprout of one mm or less. (Reuters).

Device extends victims lives: An electronic shock device planted in the abdomen to correct an irregular heart beat greatly increases the life expectancy of cardiac arrest survivors, a doctor told the American Heart Association conference on Wednesday.

Very few people who recover from cardiac arrest — when the heart stops beating — survive beyond five years, said Levi Watkins, a professor of surgery at the prestigious Johns Hopkins University.

But in a test begun in 1980, 85 per cent of 7,000 survivors equipped with the device — the automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillator — survived at least 10 years. (Reuters)

Contraceptive device: A "revolutionary" new contraceptive device could be available to British women by the end of this year, it was reported in London today.

Final tests are underway in Britain on the device, which is called the Intra-Vaginal Ring (IVR).

It has several advantages over existing contraceptives, doctors cited by the British media said.

Tamperer sought controllable 'worm'

SYRACUSE, New York, Jan 19, (AP): The student charged with creating a "worm" that crippled about 6,000 computers testified yesterday that he intended to make it controllable but it grew to be unstoppable by the time it took him to go out to dinner.

Under questioning from his defence attorney in federal court, Robert Morris said he thought the computer worm would duplicate a few times a day or every few hours. Instead, the worm spread "far faster than I expected," he said.

"My intention was that it should not grow," Morris said. "Once I released it... I couldn't control it."

The Cornell University graduate student said he released the worm into the Internet computer network about 8 pm (0100 GMT) on Dec 2, 1988, then went out for dinner. When he returned about three hours later, he said, he noticed Cornell's own computer was slow to respond to commands.

Morris testified that he released the worm into the national network through computers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In computer terminology, a worm is a variant of so-called "virus" programmes that can cause damage when they duplicate in computers.

Morris said that when he found copies of the worm in the Cornell system in Ithaca, New York, where he was working from, he knew it was spreading and he realised it wasn't working right.

"He wanted to make a virus that would spread over the network, but there was never any question of having it do anything bad," Paul Graham, a Harvard graduate student and friend of Robert T. Morris, told jurors Wednesday.

Graham testified that Morris told him in October 1988 he had discovered a bug, or flaw, in the Internet network. "I think he had just discovered it. He had to tell

someone about it. He was very excited," Graham said.

Graham said that he believed Morris just wanted to break into university computers, but that his friend must have known there were other computers on the Internet system, such as business and military facilities.

In testimony Tuesday, a computer specialist said researchers at an army lab, fearing that a foreign enemy was trying to steal weapons information, shut down their computers for nearly a week after the runaway programme, variously described as a "virus" or "worm," appeared.

Upbeat Bush ends 1st year

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (Agencies): President George Bush yesterday celebrated the completion of his first year in office, brushing aside "second-guessing" over the US invasion of Panama and pledging US assistance to the beleaguered country.

Two days before the actual Jan 20 anniversary of his inauguration, Bush joined members of his cabinet, Vice President Dan Quayle and thousands of presidential appointees at an upbeat ceremony at Constitution Hall.

"All America has triumphed," Bush claimed. "It's been quite a year."

Bush said the United States was enjoying "the longest peacetime boom in our history," with low unemployment and moderate inflation.

As he has in recent weeks, Bush prodded Congress to reduce capital gains tax rates and enact his proposals for child-care, clean air and to combat crime.

"I will wait till the second-guessers see our second year," he said.

Bush called the invasion of Panama, which led to the arrest of Manuel Antonio Noriega "a tremendous success."

Quayle, who preceded Bush on stage, told the audience, "President Bush has kept his promises to the American people. No matter how, peace through strength and the day of the dictator is over."

Bush is offering sneak previews of his agenda state of the union address in speeches and appearances around the country that seek to highlight his agenda for "a world at peace."

Bush has been laying out the basic themes that aides say he will sound in the annual presidential speech to a joint Senate-House of representatives session on the evening of Jan 31.

He highlighted the war on drugs and crime, education and other topics in a kickoff speech last week to the American Farm Bureau in Orlando, Florida.

A few days later, Bush's address to the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce laid down his basic defence position: He would not "surrender" the muscle of our defence posture despite a relaxation of tensions in Eastern Europe.

The President is to further outline his agenda for 1990 in a speech today to the National Association of Homebuilders in Atlanta.

Here are highlights of polls conducted by the three major television networks in affiliation with major newspapers and reported Wednesday and yesterday.

■ NBC TV Network-Washington Post poll: Of 1,518 adults, 79 per cent approved of Bush's handling of his job, six points better than president Ronald Reagan's peak in the same poll.

■ CBS TV Network-New York Times: 76 per cent of 1,557 people approved.

■ NBC TV Network-Wall Street Journal: 71 per cent of 1,500 approved.

A Gallup poll earlier this month gave Bush an approval rating of 80 per cent, the highest for any president at any time since World War II. Pres. John F. Kennedy peaked at 77 per cent.

Public opinion polls show Bush's approval rating was great news for the party.

But if the Republicans were happy over Bush's popularity — his nearest competitor was John Kennedy with 77 per cent after a year in office — they were dismayed over how to handle the abortion issue which hurt them in November elections.

Americans for Democratic Action said Wednesday that Bush's administration threatened to undermine the US constitution with its invasion of Panama.

"Americans should be prepared to fight and die for what is right," Democratic Congressman Charles Rangel told reporters. "The question I ask is whether it was morally and constitutionally right."

DC 'drug' mayor held

FBI agents catch Barry while smoking crack

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): Mayor Marion Barry, embattled by repeated accusations of drug use, faces federal narcotics charges today after a sting operation that law enforcement sources say caught him on videotape smoking crack cocaine.

The mayor of the capital city of the United States was scheduled to be arraigned on drug charges later today before a US magistrate.

Barry, who planned to announce his candidacy for a fourth term on Sunday, was arrested Thursday night at a downtown hotel. FBI agents and local police videotaped him smoking crack, a cheap derivative of cocaine, after a friend sold it to him, according to a law enforcement

source who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Authorities had not determined whether Barry would face a misdemeanor or felony charge, sources said. The charges would depend on the amount of cocaine or cocaine-base seized when Barry was arrested at the Vista International Hotel, six blocks from the White House, sources said.

"It's a misdemeanor kind of thing," said Barry's attorney, R. Kenneth Mundy. Asked what amount of drug might be involved, he pinched his forefinger and thumb closely together and grinned.



Barry, stung



Barry being escorted to his home by law enforcement officers. (Reuters wirephoto).

US child abuse case Two acquitted

LOS ANGELES, Jan 19, (Reuters): The longest criminal trial in US history ended yesterday with a teacher and her son acquitted on 52 counts of child molestation and the jury unable to reach a verdict on 13 further counts after three years of evidence.

Peggy McMartin Buckley, 63, and her son Raymond Buckley, 31, were near tears as their long ordeal ended.

After the verdict, several of the parents who packed the courtroom expressed bitterness and disbelief. Some wept.

The case, which cost taxpayers \$15 million, began with a police investigation in August 1983 of the now-closed McMartin pre-school. Parents charged child abuse, and during months of testimony the prosecution tried to paint a picture of molestation, pornography and satanic rites.

Defence lawyers said stories told in the courtroom defied common sense and that medical evidence was unreliable.

The jury of 12 — 10 of them parents — listened to 60,000 pages of evidence from 124 witnesses.

Superior court Judge William Pounders took the unusual step of having the verdicts of 52 of the 65 counts unsealed in court, making them official.

The prosecution could call for a retrial of the 13 counts on which the jury was deadlocked. Twelve counts were against the son.

Charges against five other people had been dropped.

During the trial the prosecution contended children were forced to play naked, witness satanic rituals and animal mutilations and be photographed for pornographic purposes.



Hall, Cassidy starrer

Model Jerry Hall with American singer Shaun Cassidy at the Lyric Theatre in London on Jan 18 where they will be starring in the 1955 classic "Bus Stop". Hall, who will be making her West End stage debut in the role made famous by Marilyn Monroe, said today that she and Mick Jagger had finally decided to marry, the Press Association reported. (Reuters wirephoto)

Intruder abducts girls in sleep

DALLAS, Jan 19, (AP): Life in a quiet, residential section of the city isn't the same since a nocturnal intruder snatched four sleeping girls from their homes.

Officers patrol on foot, homeowners use security systems even when they're home and parents and school officials grapple with protecting children without traumatising them.

Some parents tell of changing the pink drapes in their daughters' rooms to white to avoid tipping someone to the location of girls' rooms.

Since September, four sleeping girls have been taken from their north Dallas homes in the middle of the night. A man sexually assaulted three of them, police say.

The latest episode occurred a week ago, when an intruder carried an 8-year-old girl from her bedroom but dropped her outside the house, unharmed, after she screamed.

Some neighbourhood men have quit taking evening walks for fear people will suspect them. Other residents worry that someone will get shot accidentally as tensions rise.

The parents are really struggling with how to protect their children and at the same time keep from instilling fear in their children so that they can't sleep at night," said Lori Messerschmidt.

More than 500 parents from the middle-to-upper-class neighbourhoods came to meetings Tuesday at two schools to talk about the attacks with school officials and police.

In the exclusive Bent Tree West Development where the latest attack occurred, the homeowners' association passed out fliers asking parents to take safety precautions: locked doors, watching their children, using security systems even when they're at home.

"Our neighbourhood knows each other, that's why it was so shocking," said Jane Hood, who lives in the development. "But I think everybody on our street is remembering to lock their doors."

Police said Wednesday they have no solid leads in the attacks. The victims, all elementary school-age girls, haven't been able to give good descriptions, although all say the attacker was a white man with dark hair, police said.

"We aren't going to have anything to say yet," Mundy said after visiting the mayor.

Barry's arrest resulted from a joint undercover "public corruption probe" by the FBI and the internal affairs division of the Washington metropolitan police department, US attorney Jay Stephens said in a statement.

The mayor has been plagued in recent years by accusations of drug use as well as the corruption convictions of several top city officials. He has repeatedly denied ever using or buying drugs.

Barry's troubles, coupled with the city's soaring murder rate that police attribute to drug-trafficking, have attracted nationwide attention.

Former Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, who has campaigned against drug use across the country, fuelled speculation he would run for mayor when he moved to Washington last year. But Jackson said he would not challenge Barry, and he declined comment on the arrest through a spokesman last night.

Councilwoman Charlotte Drew Jarvis, who has announced her candidacy for mayor, said Barry's arrest "changes the political landscape of the city."

David Clarke, city council chairman and a mayoral candidate, called the arrest "a tragic moment in our city's history."

Top city officials met into the early hours today to assess the impact of the mayor's arrest on the operation of the District of Columbia's government.

The undercover operation was set up several weeks ago in an attempt to obtain evidence that Barry was a drug user, said one source.

Law enforcement officials released no details of the events leading up to the arrest.

A local television station, WUSA, reported that Barry was lured to the hotel to visit a long-time woman friend from California.

The station said the FBI asked the woman to come to Washington a week ago to set up a meeting with Barry. Barry made several previous trips to see her during her stay, the station said. FBI agents babysat the woman's children during her visit, according to the report.

The arrest occurred a day before today's scheduled sentencing of Charles Lewis, a former friend of the mayor and now a government informant, for conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

Hearing on Reagan subpoena

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): A US judge on Wednesday ordered a hearing in connection with John Poindexter's effort to subpoena former president Ronald Reagan as a witness at Poindexter's upcoming trial.

US District Court Judge Harold Greene said next Tuesday's court session will focus on whether a president or former president may be subpoenaed to be a witness at a trial under any circumstances.

Greene asked that lawyers for Reagan, Poindexter, the Justice Department and the Iran-Contra prosecutor's office address possible alternatives to bringing Poindexter to court to testify during Reagan's upcoming trial.

Alternatives might be having Reagan give a videotaped deposition or giving written responses to questions.

Poindexter is seeking court approval to subpoena Reagan's testimony, asserting that the president authorised some of the activities in the Iran-Contra affair.

Life after Aids is improving and death no longer as swift and certain: studies

CHICAGO, Jan 19, (AP): Aids patients with the type of pneumonia that most often strikes them are living longer than they once did, according to two studies that confirm "life after Aids is improving," researchers say.

The studies, published in today's journal of the American Medical Association, found adults with the type of pneumonia known as PCP are surviving significantly longer than they did in the early 1980s.

PCP, or pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, is the most common Aids-related infection and had been regarded as one of the most quickly fatal diseases that can overwhelm the damaged immune systems of people with Aids.

"The data in these reports appears to confirm what

clinicians, investigators, and patients have known for several years: Life after Aids is improving and death is no longer as swift and as certain as in the early years of the epidemic," said an editorial accompanying the studies.

The dramatic improvement in the two-year survival rate after Aids diagnoses hasn't been matched by a similar improvement in five-year survival, which remains low, said the editorial by Dr Richard E. Chaisson of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

New antibiotics to prevent PCP in Aids patients, and the highly successful anti-Aids drug Zidovudine, have produced hope that "what was once a uniformly fatal illness has become a 'chronic, manageable disease'."

Chaisson wrote. One of the studies examined adults diagnosed with Aids in 1984 or 1985, among whom PCP was an early sign of the disease. Just 42.7 per cent of those patients survived a year, the researchers said.

By 1986 and 1987, the one-year survival rate had risen to 54.5 per cent.

The gain in survival was observed in homosexual men and intravenous drug users of both sexes, in all age and racial groups, in all geographic regions, and in patients with or without other diseases at the time, said the author, Dr Jeffrey E. Harris of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"Better diagnosis and treatment, particularly the introduction of Zidovudine (formerly called AZT), may have contributed to the decline in mortality," he wrote.

Similar trends were documented in a second study in the journal, this one of 4,323 San Francisco patients diagnosed with Aids between July 1981 and Dec 31, 1987.

The government plans to stop marking passports of Aids-infected foreigners and will also relax travel rules related to Aids in advance of two major medical conferences, federal officials said Wednesday.

Currently, travellers to the United States are required to state whether or not they are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus of HIV, which causes Aids.

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Cartel pledges again to give up drug trade

Extraditables release one hostage, vow to free all

BOGOTA, Jan 19, (AP): The Medellin cartel late Thursday released another kidnapping victim and repeated a pledge to release all hostages and abandon the illicit drug trade.

The Extraditables, the armed wing of the cartel, made the promise to release hostages in a message to US President George Bush. The kidnapping victim, Roberto Toro Gonzalez, said the cartel made him memorise the message and then chained him to window grating of a house in southwestern Medellin.

Toro Gonzalez, 23, is the son of a wealthy Colombian family that owns a chain of stores. He was kidnapped on Dec 14.

Journalists from Colombia's two major radio networks, Caracol and RCN, who had been tipped by anonymous phone callers, arrived at the scene shortly after Toro Gonzalez's captors left in a car.

The Extraditables' message indicated that Bush should view the Medellin cartel leaders as any other suspected traffickers willing to cut a deal with authorities.

"If President Bush and the men of the DEA (US Drug Enforcement Administration) do not believe the word of drug traffickers, why do they negotiate with them and why do they let them testify against other suspects?" the message asked, apparently referring to the plea bargaining agreements often made between drug suspects and US authorities.

Bush said Wednesday in Washington that the drug traffickers' promises should not be believed.

Jury for banker's trial being chosen

TAMPA, Florida, Jan 19, (UPI): Jury selection started yesterday in the trial of six defendants, including Manuel Noriega's personal banker, charged in a \$32 million international money-laundering case.

Jury selection started at 9:30 am before US district judge Terrell Hodges, who cleared the courtroom to make room for the pool of 100 prospective jurors in the case stemming from a 33-count money-laundering and drug-trafficking indictment returned in 1988.

As the trial was about to start Tuesday, two divisions of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International agreed to plead guilty to money laundering charges and forfeit more than \$14 million in certificates of deposit bought with illegal profits.

The US government also dropped charges against another defendant, bank officer Iqbal Ashraf, and on Wednesday defendant Gonzalo Mora Jr. pleaded guilty to 32 counts of money laundering and one count of conspiracy to traffic drugs.

Meanwhile, Hodges refused to suppress a statement given to US customs service agents by Amjad Awan, another defendant and former personal banker of Noriega's, who had testified that Noriega had been involved in money laundering.

In refusing to suppress Awan's statements, Hodges said, "although Mr. Awan made reference to the fact that he was, quote, 'a little high,' he did not testify or in any way say that he was drunk. It is my determination that he gave this statement freely."

Awan testified earlier that he and other defendants were arrested in October 1988 while attending a hogus hachefor party staged by federal authorities and that he was "dazed and a little high" from drinking.

"I would say the Noriega subject came up often," during his interrogation by customs agents, Awan said. "I would say more than 75 per cent of the questions were about Noriega."

At one point, Awan said, customs agent Michael Miller pulled out his gun, pointed it at him and threatened to shoot.

"He told me I was in serious trouble and I had better cooperate," said Awan, who testified to support a defence motion to suppress evidence collected from his interrogation.

Miller in testimony on Tuesday denied having threatened Awan.

Hodges also denied a defence motion to bar prosecutors from submitting evidence uncovered in the Miami drug-trafficking case against Noriega, who was awaiting trial in a holding cell at the Miami federal courthouse.

Hodges agreed to allow Mora to withdraw his guilty plea on the most serious charge of conspiracy to traffic in drugs if prosecutors fail during the trial to obtain convictions against his co-defendants.

The sentencing hearing would be deferred until the government has completed its case," Hodges told Mora. "If the government is unable to prove the charge against you, you will be able to withdraw your plea of guilty."

But Mora may not rescind the 32 others guilty pleas. He would face a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$4 million fine if convicted on the drug-trafficking conspiracy charge.



Pretrial fights with his cuffed hands as he peers up to the entrance to the federal court, Jan 18. (Reuter wirephoto)

March trial for Noriega

Lengthy delay expected

MIAMI, Jan 19, (Agencies): A US judge who set March 5 as the starting date for the trial of deposed Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega said yesterday the proceedings would likely be delayed until at least September or October.

Judge William Hoeveler said he was required by law to set a trial date within 10 weeks of arraignment after one defendant had requested a speedy trial.

Announcing the date in court on Wednesday, he had said many of the six defendants in the case could seek a postponement.

"I can't see all of them going along with this date," Hoeveler told Reuters yesterday, adding that the drug trafficking trial probably would not begin before next autumn.

Noriega's lawyers have said they would need up to a year to prepare his defence on charges of aiding Colombian cocaine traffickers and pocketing \$4.6 million in bribes.

In Tampa, Florida, Panamanian businessman Enrique Pretet, 47, charged with Noriega in a separate marijuana indictment, pleaded not guilty and was ordered held without bail.

Noriega, who is to be tried first on a 1988 cocaine trafficking indictment in Miami, is accused in the Tampa case of taking bribes to help ferry marijuana to the United States.

Hoeveler said he was determined that Noriega's lawyers have access to him during preparation of the defence. But he declined to say whether he would allow prosecutors to move Noriega outside of south Florida.

He has been held in a cell beneath the US courthouse here since he surrendered in Panama

City and was flown to Florida on January 3.

The trial date was set shortly after Noriega issued a statement denying prosecution claims that one of his co-defendants, Luis del Cid, headed Panama's intelligence agency or served as its right-hand man.

Hoeveler set the trial for the week of March 5 after he continued a bond hearing for Del Cid, who remains in jail, to give his defence more time to respond to new allegations by prosecutors.

Del Cid's attorney, Samuel Burstin, reminded the judge that he has yet to rule on motions calling for separate trials for Del Cid and several other co-defendants.

Outside the courtroom, Noriega attorneys Steven Kollin and Frank Rubino, refused to comment when asked whether they would be ready to conduct their client's defence in court by the first week in March.

Del Cid, 46, has pleaded innocent to charges of collecting bribe money and acting as a liaison between Noriega and drug traffickers who allegedly used Panama as a conduit for drug shipments to the United States. He faces 70 years in prison and \$550,000 in fines if convicted on all counts.

Also Wednesday, another Panamanian co-defendant named along with Noriega in a federal indictment in Tampa surrendered to FBI agents in Panama and was extradited to the United States.

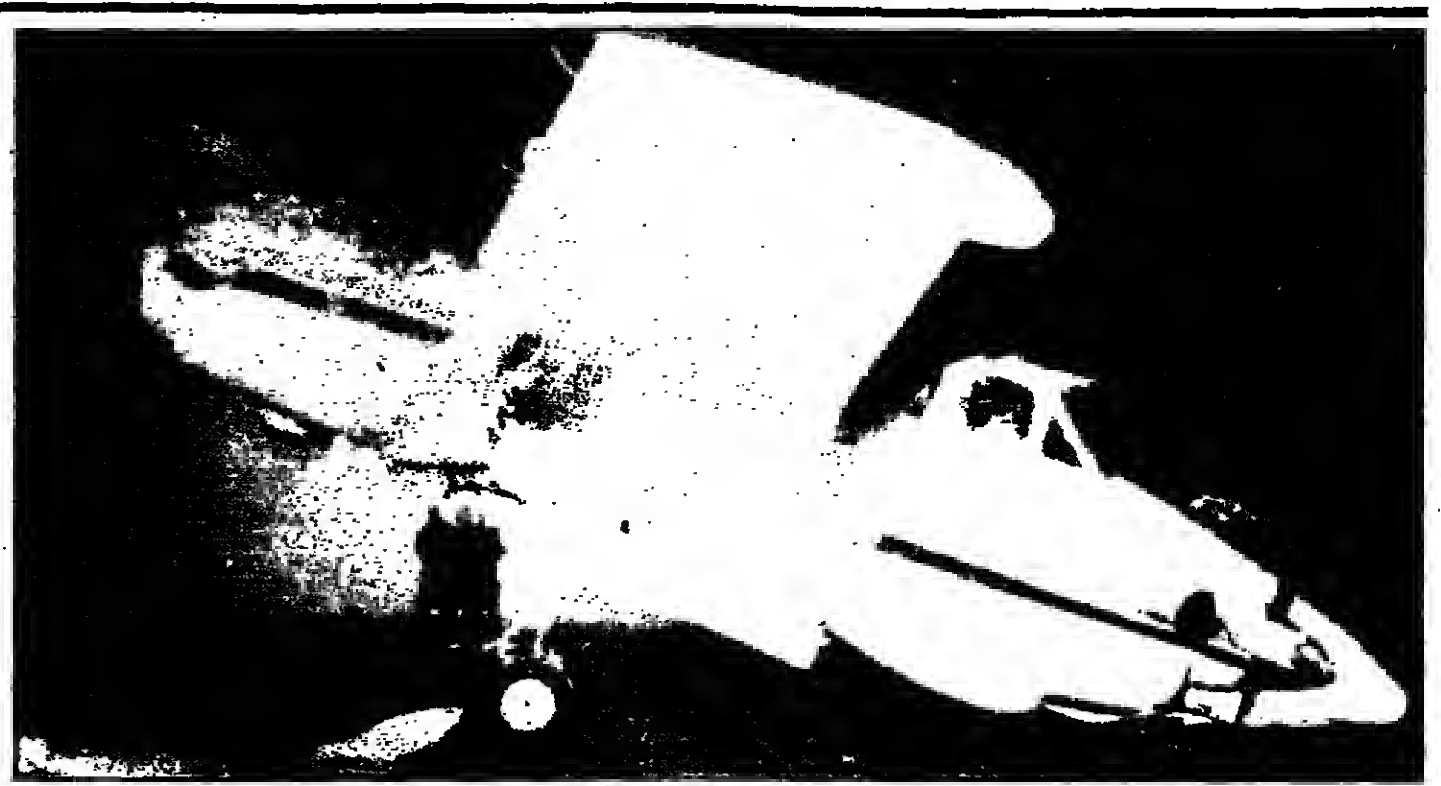
During Wednesday's bond hearing in Miami, Burstin read Noriega's statement on Del Cid, who surrendered and was taken into custody on drug charges after the US invasion of Panama last month.

"We want (the troops) out of there as soon as possible," Bush said Wednesday before attending a National Security Council meeting on Panama. "It's my objective to get the troops out and get back to the levels before this military action."

"It has nothing to do with the summit in Cartagena at all... I'm not driven by the summit," the president said.



Toro takes a drink of water after being freed by the 'Extraditables' in Medellin. (Reuter wirephoto)



Workers investigate the wreckage of a twin-engine Beechcraft hit by Eastern Airlines 727. (Reuter wirephoto)

1 dead, 1 hurt as US planes collide

Fatal air crashes reached a peak in '89

ATLANTA, Jan 19, (AP): An Eastern Airlines jet landing last night sheared off the top of a twin-engine aircraft that touched down just before it, killing one person and injuring another aboard the smaller plane, officials said.

The 7:10 pm (0010 GMT today) collision between the Eastern Boeing 727 and a Beechcraft King Air 100 occurred on a runway at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, officials said. No one was injured aboard the jetliner, said airport spokesman John Braden.

The two male victims were taken to South Fulton Medical Centre; one was dead on arrival and the other was listed in stable condition, hospital officials said. There were no reports of other injuries.

The collision involved Eastern flight 111, which originated in Montreal, and a twin-propeller plane flying from DeKalb Peachtree airport on the edge of Atlanta to Hartsfield, about 15 miles (24 kilometres) south, said officials with the Federal Aviation Administration.

"Passengers on the Eastern flight are ok. No injuries," said Eastern spokesman Robin Matell in Miami. "The extent of

damage on our plane is wing damage." The jet carried 141 passengers and a crew of eight, he said.

Roger Myers, an FAA spokesman in Atlanta, said the Eastern plane was completing its landing as the Beechcraft was still taxiing on the runway.

"The Eastern airliner landed behind him, and they collided on

private or general aircraft, the safety board said, the lowest figure for that category since it began keeping statistics. There were 781 deaths involving general aviation accidents in 1988.

The board said the fatal accident rate for general or private aviation continued "an improving trend that lasted most of the decade."

Despite the high number of airline accidents involving fatalities last year, the overall accident rate for commercial air carriers and commuters declined, the safety board said.

Panama outlines plans to rebuild

Warrant for Febres Cordero: The supreme court has issued an arrest order for former president Leon Febres Cordero, who is accused of embezzlement of public funds in a trial involving his son-in-law.

The case involves the alleged payment of \$150,000 to an Israeli anti-terrorism expert in 1987 while Febres Cordero was president. (AP)

PANAMA CITY, Jan 19, (Reuters): Panama's new leaders outlined a broad plan for national reconstruction yesterday and said aid from the United States and other nations was vital.

In their first major address since the Dec 20 USA invasion, President Guillermo Endara and his vice President, Guillermo Ford, and Ricardo Arias Calderon, said reviving the economy, slanking unemployment and winning public trust in the new security forces were top priorities.

Endara said foreign aid, primarily from the United States, was crucial to economic revival but stressed that the Panamanians themselves were responsible for their future.

"The emphasis is on what we have to do for ourselves by ourselves because on that depends fundamentally our recovery," he said.

Also yesterday Costa Rican President Oscar Arias said in San Jose that Endara will visit the neighbouring nation next Monday to discuss reconstruction and the role of security forces in a democratic Panama.

"I think the most important task now facing the president is to reconcile his people, to unite the Panamanians," said Arias, a Nobel Peace prize winner.

Ford, who is also planning minister, announced new job programmes and said that a third of the workers were jobless after the invasion which ousted General Manuel Noriega.

All three, whose televised speeches were interrupted by applause, attacked the corruption of the Noriega government.

Endara cited economic contraction of 25 per cent in the past two and a half years "comparable to what the countries most affected by the great depression of the 30s experienced."

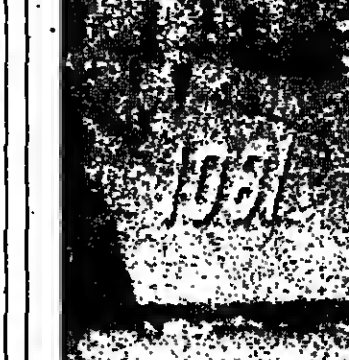
The three stood in last May's poll, which Noriega had vowed when his chosen candidates appeared to be losing. They were sworn in on a US military base as the invasion began.

Arias Calderon, also the civilian head of the new public forces, said the force's size and budget would be cut.

Many Panamanians remain fearful that the force could threaten to democratic government, and Arias Calderon urged Panamanians to trust it.

"We have to give our support, our respect, and eventually our friendship... to this public force that was born with democracy," he said.

President George Bush said Wednesday he still wants the rest of US invasion troops withdrawn from Panama "as soon as possible," but he feels under no pressure to get them out before next month's drug summit in Colombia.



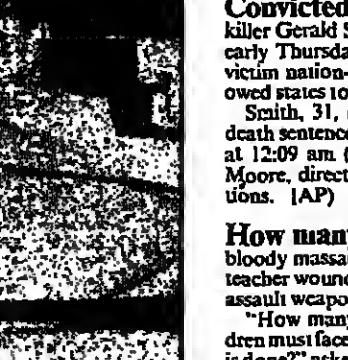
Thousands of Panamanians gathered in a public square to celebrate the end of the US invasion of Panama.

Frigate, tanker collide

A US Navy frigate and a Liberian tanker carrying thousands of barrels of oil collided Wednesday in Boston Harbour, but no injuries were reported and none of the fuel was spilled, the coast guard said.

The coast guard was notified of the accident, which occurred around 9 am in the No. 2 Anchorage, about 1 mile (1.5 km) southeast of Logan International Airport, petty officer Liz Brennan said.

The USS Aylwin (shown top), a 438-foot-long (134-m) vessel based in Newport, Rhode Island, apparently struck the stern of the Pluto (shown bottom), a Liberian tanker, Brennan said.



Thousands of Panamanians gathered in a public square to celebrate the end of the US invasion of Panama.

Plains guilty as charged: A man accused of trying to hijack an America West Airliner to Cuba has said he was "guilty as charged" and apologised for what he explained was an act of desperation to escape death threats.

Jose Manuel Gonzalez-Gonzalez, 39, of New Orleans, was charged with aircraft piracy and assaulting a flight attendant during Tuesday's 10:45 pm (0345 GMT Wednesday) flight from Houston to Las Vegas, Nevada.

Passengers said Gonzalez-Gonzalez grabbed flight attendant Stacy Wood, 26, announced he had a bomb and demanded to go to his native Cuba. (AP)

Convicted killer executed: Convicted killer Gerald Smith was executed by lethal injection early Thursday, becoming the 121st death penalty victim nationwide since the US supreme court allowed states to restore capital punishment in 1976.

Smith, 31, of St. Louis, who had asked that his death sentence be carried out, was pronounced dead at 12:09 am (0509 GMT) by a doctor, said Dick Moore, director of the state department of corrections. (AP)

How many more must die: A year after a bloody massacre of school children in California, a teacher wounded in the attack called for a ban on all assault weapons, domestic and foreign.

"How many more people, how many more children must face the power of a bullet before something is done?" asked teacher Janet Geng on Wednesday.

Mrs Geng was wounded in the Jan 17, 1989, attack by a man who opened fire with an AK-47 at a school playground in Stockton, killing five children and wounding 29 others before he killed himself. (AP)

US-Soviet snowmobilers set out: Two US adventurers and a fellow traveller from the Soviet Union arrived in Park Falls, Wisconsin community Thursday on the second day of a 3,000 mile (8,000 km) snowmobile trip across the United States, part of Europe and Russia.

The trip began Wednesday near the twin cities of Minneapolis-St Paul in Minnesota, but because of a lack of snow the snowmobilers had to be transported to Wisconsin. Making the trip are Grigori Shulik of Moscow, Scott Elertson and Lee Busse.

"I hope this trip will help improve relations between our two great countries," said Shulik. (UPI)

Expedition reaches last stop: A six-man international ski and sled dog team trying to make the first unmechanised crossing of Antarctica arrived Thursday at the Soviet scientific base of Vostok, the last major stop before the journey's final leg.

The arrival of the trans-Antarctica expedition, which is led by Will Steger of the United States and Jean-Louis Etienne of France, was confirmed when Etienne called a Paris science museum via satellite telephone, according to a statement from the expedition's headquarters in St Paul. (AP)

Barbara doubts women fit for combat

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (Reuters): President George Bush's wife said yesterday she doubted women were physically strong enough for combat, despite an incident during the US invasion of Panama last month in which the female officer led troops under fire.

"I do not think a woman is as strong as a man," Barbara Bush said in a radio interview. "If you endanger the lives of your buddies then that just automatically rules it out, forgetting morale problems and other problems that are very important to the military."

Mrs Bush clarified earlier remarks she made which prompted some reports that she favoured the use of women in combat — a stance contrary to her husband's position.

"If you ask me do I think a woman is intelligent enough or emotionally balanced enough to fly an airplane or do anything — absolutely. I think women are, if not superior, certainly equal to men," she said.

The invasion has renewed debate in the United States over the use of women in combat after a woman army captain led a military police unit during fighting in Panama.

Anger over Panama invasion forces Quayle to reschedule visit

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): Some stops Vice President Dan Quayle wanted to make in Central and South America may have to be rescheduled, the White House said yesterday, as Latin countries continue to voice resentment over the US invasion of Panama.

"It's not 'don't come,'" Quayle acknowledged yesterday in an interview with the Associated Press. "It's a matter of timing on when you will come," he said, expressing the reaction he has gotten from nations he wanted to visit.

Quayle said his trip will be important both

symbolically, to show the administration's interest in keeping good relations with its neighbours, and diplomatically, to try and smooth any feelings injured by the Dec 20 invasion.

Latin officials have said this is not a good time for Quayle to visit their countries because of strong sentiment against the continued presence of US troops in Panama.

The itinerary announced Wednesday by Quayle's office for his trip next week, with stops in Panama, Honduras and Jamaica, falls short of the journey indicated by

President George Bush's announcement Jan 5.

"Some of the trips may have to be scheduled for a later time," White House Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater said Thursday. He declined to comment on the reported resistance from Latin countries.

"The question of when the meeting takes place is not nearly as important to us as simply that the messages be delivered" that Bush wants to restore good relations with the Latin nations, Fitzwater said.



Bush shakes hands with General Thurman during a meeting at the White House, Jan 17. (Reuter wirephoto)

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Japan book to spur debate

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP) — A Japanese legislator who created a firestorm with a book attacking the United States says he is simply trying to spur a more honest debate between the world's two economic superpowers.

Shintaro Ishihara's book, entitled "The Japan that can say 'No'", is a runaway best seller in Japan, with 500,000 copies sold. While no authorised version exists in English, bootleg copies translated by the Defence Department are creating quite a stir in Washington.

In the book, Ishihara argues that Japan needs to be more assertive in standing up to the United States in policy disputes. He boasts about Japan's technological superiority, calls the US military shield for Japan an illusion and complains that "Americans behave more like mad dogs than watch dogs."

He dismisses US criticism of Japan as racially motivated and suggests that unless the United States changes its tune, Tokyo might stop supplying the microchips the Defence Department needs for accurate targeting of US nuclear missiles and sell them to the Soviets instead.

Such a decision, Ishihara speculates in his book, "would instantly change the balance of military power."

In an interview yesterday, Ishihara did not recant any of his comments although he contended that the "pirated" version now in circulation in Washington leaves out certain clarifying comments.

With Japan accounting for almost half of the United States' \$111-billion annual trade deficit, efforts to stem the flow of Japanese imports and boost US export sales are a prime topic on Capitol Hill. Ishihara's book is being cited by critics of Japan as a prime example of Japanese intransigence in dealing with trade problems.

During an interview, Ishihara said that relations between the United States and Japan were in a transition phase in which Japan needed to play a more assertive role.

"We have come to a new era where a redefinition of the US-Japan relationship is called for," he said, adding that he hoped his book would contribute to a franker discussion of the real issues between the two countries.

Ishihara, a member of the Japanese parliament and one of the front-runners for prime minister last year, disputed contentions that his views were out of the mainstream, citing the popularity of his book as proof that many Japanese agree with his thoughts.

Ishihara's book comes at a time when public opinion polls in both the United States and Japan reflect a growing uneasiness. Americans now rank Japan's economic prowess as a greater threat to the United States than the Soviet's military might while a majority of Japanese in a recent poll complained that the United States was unfairly pressuring Japan on trade issues.

During his Washington visit, Ishihara, 57, a member of Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's conservative Liberal-Democratic Party, was meeting with members of Congress and journalists, promoting the idea of debates between Japanese and US lawmakers.

He said he hoped to return to the United States after the Japanese elections in February to hold the first of these debates. He also plans to bring out the authorised English version of his book in April, absent the portions in the Japanese version written by Sony Corp. Chairman Akio Morita.

Boycott Burma polls call

Rangoon justifies Suu Kyi ban

RANGOON, Jan 19, (Agencies) — The military government has said it banned a popular opposition leader from upcoming elections because of her links to insurgent ethnic and dissident student groups.

At the same time an alliance of Burmese dissidents and insurgents in Thailand, saying the election would be "neither free nor fair," called for a nationwide boycott of the balloting because of the action against Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy, the main opposition group.

Li Col Than Tun, spokesman for the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) of top military officers, said the opposition leader was unqualified to run for election because of her links to the underground organisations.

He quoted reports in the Bangkok Post on Jan 14 and 16 saying the ethnic Kachin independence army and a group of anti-government students pledged full support for the popular 44-year-old daughter of Burmese independence hero Gen. Aung San in her bid for a seat in Parliament in the May 27 general elections.

Waving copies of the newspaper, Than Tun said political parties will have to operate strictly within the framework of the law. Any links to insurgent organisations are forbidden under Burma's election law.

Than Tun promised the government would adhere to its pledge to hold free and fair elections. Western diplomats in Rangoon contacted from Bangkok, however, said the ban on Suu Kyi, under house arrest since last July 20, was the latest in a series of actions that indicated the elections were unlikely to be fair.

They said hundreds of opposition political activists have been arrested in the last six months. Former prime minister U Nu was banned from participating in the elections along with other senior political leaders.

In rather a belated move, Than Tun issued a warning to the US embassy because of comments on the arrest of opposition politicians last July.

The government also warned political parties not to disrupt the elections.

We were right: Li East Europe vindicated action

BEIJING, Jan 19, (Reuters) — China has justified its killing of hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators last year by saying international events — a clear reference to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe — vindicated its decision to use military force.

Beijing's headline statement, made in a foreign policy speech by Premier Li Peng, followed a brief official report that 573 prisoners linked to the protests had been released.

The Ministry of Public Security said the prisoners were freed because they had pleaded guilty and repented.

"Our policy is to educate anyone who can be

educated and temper punishment with leniency," said a ministry spokesman quoted by the official New China News agency yesterday.

It was impossible to verify the report independently. No names or dates of release were given and the ministry did not say how many remained in jail.

Diplomats said the release report, the first since thousands were arrested after the army crushed democracy protests last June, was intended to improve China's image abroad.

Li's tough statement made it clear that the Communist Party's ruling elite felt no remorse over the events of June nor would relax its grip after lifting martial law in the capital last week.



Hitoshi gets out of his car just after being shot in front of the Nagasaki City Hall Jan 18. (Reuters wirephoto)

Radical shoots Nagasaki mayor

TOKYO, Jan 19, (Agencies) — The mayor of Nagasaki, who ignited a controversy by blaming late emperor Hirohito for not saving his city from the atomic bomb, was in stable condition today with a bullet wound in his chest as police held a right-wing extremist suspected in the attack, officials said.

Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima, 67, was shot through the back yesterday as he walked to his official car outside the main entrance to the Nagasaki City Hall.

Only a month earlier, Motoshima, who also blamed Hirohito for getting Japan into World War II, had dropped police protection from rightist threats triggered by his taboo-breaking declaration.

Police arrested Kazumi Tajiri, 40, late yesterday at a nearby hotel and found a pistol believed to be used in the attack.

Tajiri, a leader of the Seikijuku (School of Sanity) right-wing organisation, confessed to shooting the mayor with a small-caliber gun from less than five feet away.

The School of Sanity, which has 31 members nationwide, is pledged to restoring the paramount power of the Japanese emperor.

Motoshima, fully conscious during the ordeal, was able to get on an ambulance stretcher on his own accord and was taken to Nagasaki municipal hospital where he underwent successful surgery.

Doctors said today he will probably be released from the hospital in a month.

"He is in serious condition but the bullet missed vital organs," a hospital spokesman said.

Doctors said the bullet went through his back and exited through his chest, just above the lung.

The shooting was the first assassination attempt on a major Japanese politician since former prime minister Nobusuke Kishi was stabbed by a right-wing nationalist in 1960. Kishi, who survived the attack, upset nationalists by signing a security treaty with the United States.

Tajiri stalked his prey for days and made no secret of his plans, police said.

At a public meeting attended by the mayor a week ago, Tajiri told a reporter from Japan's Kyodo news service that he had missed his opportunity to "attack" Motoshima, the news agency said.

"But I'm going to do it one of these days," Tajiri told the disbelieving journalist. "Better not take your eyes off him."

Motoshima triggered a nationwide debate on Dec 7, 1988 — the 47th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour — when he publicly blamed the then-ailing Hirohito for getting Japan into the war and failing to end it before the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Motoshima said he knew he was risking his life when he publicly stated his views.

After his comments, rightists began staging protests outside city hall. He received hate mail with bullets and razor blades in the envelopes. Shots were fired at mayoral offices in the middle of the night.

Some 300 city hall workers rallied today to protest the shooting of Motoshima.

Europe

Pope warns Vatican judges: Pope John Paul warned Vatican judges on Thursday against misguided compassion in granting marriage annulments — the only way for Catholics to dissolve their vows.

The Pontiff was addressing judges of the Sacred Rota, the Vatican court which rules on applications for marriage annulments, at the start of the Holy See's judicial year.

"The judge must always guard against the risk of a misinterpreted compassion which would lapse into sentimentality," the Pope said. (Reuters)

Proper burial for aborted foetuses: Aborted foetuses over 12 weeks old should be given a proper burial rather than being burnt along with hospital waste as is common practice in many hospitals, Sweden's board of social welfare said on Thursday.

Spokeswoman Marianne Thoren said the recommended change in the requirement came about largely because of parental concern. (Reuters)

UK surgeon acted unethically: A British surgeon charged with professional misconduct broke down in tears in the witness stand on Thursday and admitted he had acted unethically in transplanting kidneys from four Turks.

Michael Joyce said he had carried out kidney transplant operations for the past 14 years and added: "I have done them all unethically."

Joyce, 46, testifying to the General Medical Council's ethics committee, held his head in his hands and wept after he denied he knew that the Turks were paid for their kidneys. (Reuters)

UK women at sea: Women are soon to be allowed to go to sea in warships for the first time, overturning centuries of proudly-held tradition, it was reported in London Thursday.

Armed Forces Minister Archie Hamilton is determined to push through the proposals in Parliament next month, British officials here said.

The decision follows months of intense argument within the Ministry of Defence, the Royal Navy and the Women's Royal Naval Service, the British media pointed out. (Kuna)

Police arrest 87: Police said Thursday they have arrested 87 people allegedly involved in an international drug trafficking ring that smuggled Colombian cocaine and Turkish heroin into northern Italy.

Police said that during the last three days they arrested 85 of 118 people named in arrest warrants issued by Judge Leonardo Grassi. They said 21 suspects were already in custody on other charges and 12 were still at large.

They also said two people not named in the warrants were arrested for possession of heroin. (AP)

Asia

Seoul to form new party: President Roh Tae-Won's governing party hinted Thursday might disband and change itself into a new "Centrist Party," the latest move in efforts to reshape South Korea's faction-ridden politics.

The governing Democratic Justice Party's manoeuvring comes as the country's two main conservative opposition parties are trying to merge. (AP)

Seoul rejects North's bid: South Korea on Friday rejected a North Korean proposal for parliamentary talks on forming a joint delegation to this year's international parliamentary union.

National Assembly Speaker Kim Jai-Soon said South Korea would not respond to a North Korean letter calling for border talks Feb 7 to discuss the proposed single delegation. (AP)

Suicide rate highest in world: South Korea's suicide rate stood at 48.7 per 100,000 people last year, the highest in the world, according to a study published Friday.

The study was conducted by psychiatrists at Yonsei University Hospital and published by the Chosun Ilbo, a newspaper in Seoul. (AP)

Malaysian speaker to resign: The deputy speaker of Parliament, accused by the opposition of acting in pornographic video tapes, will resign from his post next week, newspapers reported Thursday.

Sources from D.P. Vijandran's Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) party told the Star and New Straits Times dailies that Vijandran has been asked to resign to defuse the controversy, which has been almost a daily news item in Malaysia for the past month. (AP)

Singapore hangs trafficker: Singapore on Friday hanged a 40-year-old tour guide convicted in 1987 of possessing 16 grams (five ounces) of heroin, a prison official said.

Ho Cheng Kwee was arrested in 1985 as he attempted to cross from neighbouring Malaysia into Singapore with the drugs. (Reuters)

7 aborigines die of thirst: Seven aborigines died of thirst in the desert after their truck broke down in 50-degree (122-degree Fahrenheit) heat in the Australian outback, and another member of their group was missing and feared dead, police said Friday.

The four children and three adults who died were buried by survivors along the way. Police found three survivors in the great Australian sandy desert on Thursday, and recovered four of the bodies in shallow graves.

Another man who left the band to get help remains missing and is feared dead.

A police spokesman said the group of 11 left Port Hedland in far Western Australia (state) a week ago to return to their remote home at Punma, 1,100 kilometres (682 miles) to the east. (AP)

HK to sell stockpiled ivory: Britain is giving Hong Kong a six-month extension to the international ban on ivory trade so it can sell its stockpile, the government said Wednesday.

In an effort to save Africa's elephants, currently slaughtered at a rate of 75,000 a year, more than 100 countries voted in October for a ban on ivory trade.

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told the House of Commons on Wednesday that Britain will allow Hong Kong a six-month exemption to the ban, which was to begin Thursday. (AP)

Singapore ban ivory trade: Singapore has imposed a ban on ivory trade in a move to protect elephants which have been recently designated as endangered species.

The biennial Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (Cites) in Lausanne decided last Oct 17 to apply a ban on ivory



Ice pagoda

Chinese tourists walk carefully down the steps of a giant ice pagoda in Harbin, northern China. The pagoda is one of many attractions at the annual ice festival in the frozen city near the Soviet border. (Reuters wirephoto)

trade from Jan 18. Singapore is a member of Cites. The government announced that permits would no longer be issued for the ivory trade. (Kuna)

Asian population becoming older: The population of Asia is rapidly ageing and governments must devise policies to account for the change and to help the elderly as traditional family support systems start to weaken, a United Nations report said Thursday.

"The growing number of elderly persons (declined as those over 60 years old) in the Asian and Pacific population, is estimated to be at about 300 million by the end of this century," said a report issued by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (ESCAP)

It said lower birth rates and longer life expectancy had increased the proportion of the aged in many countries. (AP)

Taiwan to make available: Taiwan will make available a \$1 billion development fund to five newly democratising countries in Eastern Europe, Vice Economics Minister Wang Chien-Shien announced Friday.

The committee for the Overseas Economic Cooperation and development fund agreed to allow five Eastern European countries to apply for the fund, including Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, Wang said.

But Taiwan will only consider the applications of those countries which "show friendly intentions" to Taiwan, said Wang in an apparent reference to their willingness to exchange trade offices with the republic. (UPI)

'Blackbird's' final test flight: After more than two decades of flying top-secret reconnaissance missions, the last SR-71 "Blackbird" in Asia roared off the runway Thursday on its final flight from southern Japan.

In a spectacular gesture to military personnel and their families gathered to see the takeoff, Capt. Steve Grzebiak piloted the supersonic, rocket-like plane through a circle over the base. (AP)

Japan said gaining ground: A Japanese government laboratory has duplicated results of University of Utah nuclear fusion experiments, heightening concern that the United States could fall behind in the race to utilise the research.

Scientists at Nagoya's National Institute for Fusion Science earlier this week announced that they have observed high levels of neutrons, a fusion byproduct, in their own version of Utah's room-temperature, or "cold" fusion experiments. (AP)

Latin America

Pinochet to leave office March 11: President Augusto Pinochet will turn over the presidential seal to his civilian successor March 11, a judicial panel ruled Thursday in throwing out an appeal by president-elect Patricio Aylwin to hold his inauguration March 14.

The panel also ruled Thursday that once the new government takes office it cannot investigate wrongdoing by the military regime.

The constitutional tribunal, which decides constitutional questions, ruled in favour of Pinochet in deciding the transfer of power will take place March 11.

Aylwin, the opposition candidate who won election Dec 14 after 16 years of military government, had argued that the constitution contained a flaw that required Pinochet to step down March 11 and the new president to take office March 14.

The constitution dictates that the presidential term actually concludes March 11, but another clause says the new president takes power 90 days after the elections, which would be March 14. (UPI)

Fruit fly under control: Agricultural Minister Juan Dominguez said Thursday the government had halted any possible spread of the Mediterranean fruit fly after 12 of them were found in the fruit-growing Aconcagua valley.

"All the necessary technical measures have been taken," the minister said. He called the problem a "local emergency" that has been "virtually controlled."

Dominguez talked to reporters in the valley city of Los Andes, 77 kms (48 miles) north-east of Santiago near the border with Argentina. The 12 flies were found nearby earlier in the week, and the discovery was made public Wednesday. (AP)

Britain firm on deporting refugees

LONDON, Jan 19, (AP) — Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, hinting that Britain has quashed worldwide condemnation for forcibly repatriating Vietnamese from Hong Kong, said on Wednesday he hopes to get international backing for the programme.

The policy of repatriation is the right one and I hope this may soon be endorsed by the international community," Hurd told Parliament on his return from a four-day visit to the colony.

The announcement followed suggestions from British officials over the past week that the United States, a prime critic, has come around to the British view that there is no alternative.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office said it was "seeking clarification" of a statement by China that the communist government will bar British passport holders in Hong Kong from British consular protection after 1997, when the British colony reverts to Chinese rule.

China did not specify if the ban would apply to Hong Kong Chinese with full British passports or to those with a form of British citizenship that does not allow them to live in Britain.

Most of the 5.7 million people in Hong Kong hold the restricted citizenship which Britain acknowledges will fall away after 1997 — or are stateless refugees from China.

However, the Chinese announcement raised fears that a recent British proposal to give full passports to 50,000 key Hong Kong Chinese officials and entrepreneurs and their families as a safety net will instead encourage them to emigrate swiftly.

In addition, China said it will bar people who have the right to live outside Hong Kong from holding a string of public offices.

British government sources said any widespread ban would violate the handover agreement, signed in 1984. Under the agreement, foreigners — effectively the same as people with a right of residence outside Hong Kong — are barred only from a handful of specified top jobs.

Hurd, questioned in Parliament, insisted that Hong Kong Chinese would not lose full British passports "will be entitled to our consular protection" after 1997.

"Hong Kong Chinese who are not full United Kingdom citizens are in a different position," he added, underlining that Britain can do nothing for the rest.

He said without elaboration that the 1984 agreement stipulated that the post-1997 Hong Kong administration "may employ British and other nationals in the public sector."

It is British policy to try to bolster confidence in Hong Kong. But privately, officials expressed uneasiness.

Some observers saw the Chinese announcement as part of a strategy to stop Britain implementing the passport offer.

Two Vietnamese boat people attempted to kill themselves today in protest against a British policy of forcing asylum seekers back to their homeland, police said.

Police said the suicide attempts at the Whitehead detention centre were connected with the British policy that forcibly repatriated 51 boat people in December.

The new UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Thorvald Stoltenberg of Norway, called today for a consensus agreement on dealing with Vietnamese boat people refugees in Hong Kong.

China and Britain are taking increasingly hardline stances over the Hong Kong, which can only deepen the colony's confidence crisis in light of the 1997, diplomats said yesterday.

Hurd was advised yesterday to defer his proposal to allow 225,000 Hong Kong Chinese into Britain in a bid to encourage key workers to remain in the colony.

Government officials were censured on Wednesday for using a photo of a wounded Chinese student to illustrate a voter registration campaign.

Crisis in Papua

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea, Jan 19, (AP) — An Australian journalist was shot and wounded when a helicopter came under fire early today on the strife-torn, copper-rich island of Bougainville, the military said.

An army spokesman said Melbourne Sunday Herald reporter Mark Baker was injured in the shoulder when secessionist rebels fired on the Jet Ranger helicopter. At least six bullets penetrated the craft.

Baker was the second Australian to be wounded in two days following a raid on Wednesday when rebels overran a military stronghold, destroyed a prison and freed the captives, resulting in six people dead and 11 wounded.

Baker, accompanied by Melbourne photographer Rob Leeson, was there in report on the 14-month secessionist crisis that has claimed more than 50 lives. The photographer was not injured. Baker, 36, was reported in satisfactory condition after being evacuated to a military hospital.

On Thursday, an executive of the shutdown Bougainville copper mine was shot and wounded during an ambush. Cameron McRae, of Coff's harbour near Sydney, was wounded below the rib cage.

Factions demand break-up of GDR Communist Party

WEST BERLIN, Jan 19, (AP): East German Communist factions demanded the party's breakup today, a day after West Germany blamed the communists for the country's woes and insisted on German unity as the solution.

The West Germans are becoming increasingly concerned about the situation in East Germany, as more than 1,800 people continue to resettle in the West each day. The ongoing influx also is severely strapping West Germany's ability to feed, house

and provide them jobs.

East Germany's Communist Party, whose membership has plunged from 2.3 million to 1.4 million in six months, is now wracked by infighting.

In a statement today, "various party movements" demanded the party's "uncompromising dissolution under public control."

"The delegates to the extraordinary party congress (held in December) should again be summoned to agree to the dissolution," said the

statement, carried by the official East German news agency ADN.

The statement did not say how many party members supported the declaration, but did list seven communist groups as having backed it. "The situation in the country is again becoming critical," said the statement.

Growing instability also was a key topic a day earlier as the chief of staff to Chancellor Helmut Kohl demanded a clear commitment to German

unity from the government of East Berlin.

Chief of Staff Rudolf Seifert said the communists were "guilty" of a "lack of willingness to introduce fundamental political and economic reforms."

The majority of the more than 340,000 East Germans who fled to and resettled in West Germany are young, skilled workers, as are those who are still arriving every day.

East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow's government could fall, forcing early elections, if

two junior coalition partners decided today to leave his nine-week-old administration.

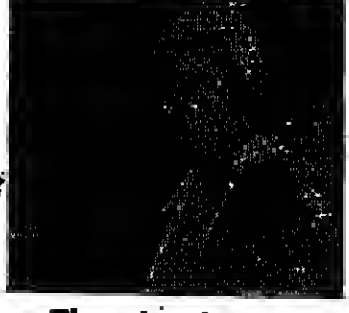
The Liberal Democrats (LDPD) and the Christian Democrats (CDU) were expected to decide at separate meetings whether to quit the five-party coalition.

The East German authorities Thursday seized documents implicating former leader Erich Honecker and other officials who are under investigation on charges of abuses of power, the East Ger-

man news agency ADN said Thursday.

The agency quoted a spokesman for East Berlin's state prosecutor's office as saying the documents were found at the former headquarters of the now-dissolved central committee of the Communist Party.

As protests gathered strength last fall, East German leader Erich Honecker "had lost touch with reality," according to the man who succeeded him.



Flery leader
Sisulu gestures at a rally held in Lusaka. (Reuters wirephoto)

Pretoria likely to scrap 'petty' act

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 19, (Agencies): South Africa said today it was giving high priority to abolishing the Separate Amenities Act, one of the pillars of apartheid used to bar blacks from parks, swimming pools and libraries.

"Scrapping the reservation of Separate Amenities Act is high on the National Party's agenda of reforms," Planning and Provincial Affairs Minister Herens Kriel told a black phone-in programme on state radio.

"I hope the scrapping of the act will be tabled in parliament this year," he said.

The 1953 act, known as petty apartheid, gives local councils the option to reserve certain public amenities for whites. These do not include schools and hospitals which are segregated by law.

In November President F.W. de Klerk opened beaches to all races and said he had decided to repeal the act.

While it does not force segregation, several towns controlled by the hard-line Conservative Party (CP) have used the act to bar blacks from local facilities in recent years.

"CP-controlled local authorities will have no legal basis to continue with separate amenities once the act is scrapped," said Kriel.

Conservatives have been incensed by the opening of the beaches and by De Klerk's moves to scrap the act, which have included forcing CP-controlled towns to allow trading by all races.

The government will reassess bans on the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and other militant opposition groups, Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee said yesterday.

The exiled (ANC) began a strategy session on Thursday in Lusaka to decide a future role for its legendary jailed leader Nelson Mandela and how best to exploit political changes in South Africa.

ANC acting president Alfred Nzo told the 35-member National Executive Committee it would have to decide "the tasks comrade Nelson will carry out after his release," which he said was likely in the near future.

He warned that De Klerk's government would move quickly for negotiations with the ANC to keep the initiative in Pretoria's hands.

Leaders of South Africa's biggest anti-apartheid youth movement met Mandela in London on Thursday and said they fully supported his leadership of the ANC.

"There is no way in which we as the youth are going to disrespect his authority. We subject ourselves to his leadership," said Peter Mokaba, president of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO).

The head of the exiled South African Communist Party has condemned one-party states and said socialism in Eastern Europe has failed in some respects.

A senior US congressman said that members of Congress were trying to work with the Bush administration on drafting new sanctions and incentives to change South Africa's racial segregation policies.

New York Mayor David Dinkins said he wanted tougher laws to stop companies that trade with South Africa from doing business with the United States' largest city.

Eleven blacks were shot dead at their homes in an area wracked by factional fighting, and seven others died in clashes between striking and non-striking black railway workers, police said yesterday.

Bulgarian reds favour multiparty democracy

Zhivkov under house arrest

SOFIA, Jan 19, (Agencies): The ruling Communist Party intends to adopt laws at an upcoming congress guaranteeing religious freedom, creating a multiparty democracy and calling for a market-oriented economy, official media said.

The draft statutes, to be enacted by the congress starting Jan 30, drop the party's "Marxist-Leninist" label and the principle of "democratic centralism" in favour of political pluralism, according to a report late yesterday by the state-run BTA news agency.

Conceding it will take years to overcome the deep economic crisis, a separate draft declaration calls for a market-oriented economy, adding the party favours "development of a whole variety of forms of social ownership," but does not spell out private enterprise.

The also proposed reorganising itself, including the ruling Politburo. Parliament already voted Jan 15 to abolish the communists' guaranteed monopoly on political power, thus formally ending more than four decades of authoritarian, one-party rule.



Princess Margarita (right) makes a victory sign along with her sister Princess Sophia. (Reuters wirephoto)

Vote on CP scrapped

Ceausescu had 21 palaces, 41 villas

BUCHAREST, Jan 19, (Agencies): Romania's provisional government, admitting it made a mistake while feeling its way towards reforms, said yesterday it had scrapped a Jan 28 referendum on outlawing the Communist Party.

However, the government said party's assets would be seized and revealed that deposed and executed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu enjoyed the use of 21 "palaces," 41 villas and 20 bunting lodges and ran multi-million-dollar enterprises that exported goods as well as feeding the communist elite.

Silviu Brucan, a senior member of the National Salvation Front that is running the country, said decisions to seize the party's assets and scrap the referendum came after "stormy debate" at an hour-long meeting of the council Wednesday night.

The referendum also was to include the question of whether to reinstate the death penalty.

The meeting also discussed the draft of a law paving the way for free elections tentatively scheduled for April. Brucan said the draft, which envisages direct election of a president and a bicameral legislature, will be discussed with other parties before being put to the public for debate.

Brucan said the decision to hold the referendum was made too hastily "under the pressure of the crowd" during a huge demonstration demanding dis-

solution of the Communist Party and executing leading Ceausescu associates.

During the demonstration — with protesters shouting "death for death" — interim President Ion Iliescu announced two decrees, one setting the referendum and the other outlawing the Communist Party. The following day Iliescu reversed himself on the party, saying its legality would be decided by the same referendum as the death sentence.

Brucan admitted that a referendum "cannot possibly be organised in less than two weeks — even in two or three months (it) would be a very shaky proposition."

The Front's leaders had been guilty of "almost panicky decision-making," Brucan said.

"The Romanian people are learning democracy and we are learning to govern democratically," he said. "Learning presupposes (that you) make mistakes. My hope is we will not make too big ones."

Brucan quoted Iliescu as saying during Wednesday's session that the death penalty carried out against Ceausescu and his wife Elena on Dec 25 was "fully justified."

The outlawing of the Communist Party was reversed because it was "anti-democratic and against the principles of the National Salvation Front," Brucan said.

But he noted that the Communist Party in effect "no longer exists ... in the consciousness of the Romanian people the Communist Party is identified with Ceausescu."

Romania's ambassador in Tehran said on Thursday its new leaders respected economic agreements made with Iran just before the downfall of Ceausescu, Tehran radio reported.

The pact included major defence contracts, according to Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati who was grilled in parliament over Ceausescu's visit to Iran days before he was toppled and executed last month.

Laszlo Tokes, the Protestant cleric who sparked Romania's revolution, says former members of Ceausescu's hated security police are still at large and he is afraid to return to his parish.

Tokes, an ethnic Hungarian whose church is in Timisoara where last month's bloody revolution began, told Reuters on Thursday the situation in the city was critical.

"The revolution has not succeeded in Timisoara. The situation is very unstable and it is difficult to say what could happen there," Tokes, 37, said during a visit to Bucharest.

The head of the Romanian Orthodox church, Patriarch Teoctist (one name), resigned on Thursday, a senior church official said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

KGB intercepts tanks export: KGB security police thwarted an illegal scheme to ship a dozen new, fully-equipped Soviet T-72 tanks to the West in a deal that stood to net the weapons' makers \$8 million profit, Soviet media reports said.

A criminal investigation had begun into the tanks and crates of machine-guns found on a train at the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, where a freighter was waiting to take them to an unnamed Western country, new reports said on Thursday.

The train had made it all the way to the Black Sea coast from the Urals factory where the weapons were made without attracting any suspicions, said the daily newspaper Trud. (Reuters)



Presses on with austerity

Yeltsin says reforms failed: Reformist Soviet politician Boris Yeltsin, saying Kremlin attempts at economic reform have failed, warned yesterday of violent revolution unless radical changes were implemented.

"Perestroika has failed. The leadership has failed," Yeltsin, one of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's most outspoken critics in parliament, said in an interview with the Dutch weekly Elsevier.

Yeltsin, the former Moscow party boss dropped by Gorbachev in 1988 for criticizing the slow pace of reform, said his former mentor had not gone far enough in restructuring the economy, allowing for private ownership, cutting defence spending and making the Soviet space programme profitable. (Reuters)

Czech premier quits party: Czechoslovak Premier Marian Calfa has left the Communist Party, reducing the number of communists in the 21-member federal government to seven, a government spokesman said Thursday.

At a news conference, spokesman Zbynek Fiala confirmed that Calfa had quit the party. He did not elaborate on when or why Calfa had given up his party membership.

Calfa was the third minister in the coalition government to leave the Communist Party within two weeks. (AP)

Talks open in Kosovo: Communists in Yugoslavia's troubled Kosovo province sat down for the first time Thursday with ethnic Albanian opposition figures to discuss political pluralism in the tightly controlled region.

The unprecedented meeting was arranged by the province's Institute of Marxism and the Communist Party of the Kosovo capital Pristina, the national Tanjug news agency reported.

Three independent movements, consisting mainly of ethnic Albanians, have been formed recently in the region and are not officially authorised. The meeting indicated the communists' policy toward the group may be changing. (AP)

US to give refugee status to Soviets: Only 5,000 to 10,000 of the estimated 400,000 Soviet citizens wishing to emigrate to the United States will be "accorded refugee status" this fiscal year, the nation's top immigration official said Thursday.

Claire McNulty, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, also said he expects an increase in the number of Armenians seeking refugee status in the United States as a result of violence in the Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. (AP)

Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki vowed on Thursday to press ahead with economic austerity in spite of the worst strikes since his Solidarity-led government took office three months ago and has called for parliament to speed up fully democratic level elections.

Solidarity leader Lech Walesa appealed to thousands of striking workers at five coal mines to go back to work, saying the government had chosen the "only road for Poland" and strikes would lead to anarchy.

The free trade union leader met Soviet Ambassador Vladimir Brovokov and demanded the removal of Soviet troops from Poland by the end of the year.

Mitsotakis says Greece is broke: Greece is broke, conservative leader Constantine Mitsotakis proclaimed on Thursday, launching his campaign for a third general election in less than a year.

The party platform for the election, called on his demand, would be that Greece was out of money after eight years of socialist rule.

New Democracy won elections in June and November but fell short of an absolute majority in the 300-seat parliament. (Reuters)

Emergency anti-pollution measures: Traffic was restricted and factories ordered to limit their use of fuel Thursday as emergency measures were enacted to combat dangerous rising levels of air pollution in the capital area.

The Environment Ministry banned private motor vehicles with licence plates ending in odd numbers until 8 pm (1800 GMT) and only half of Athens' 14,000 taxis were permitted to enter the commercial district. (AP)

Hungary wants Soviet pullout

VIENNA, Jan 19, (Agencies): Hungary said yesterday it wanted all Soviet troops to leave its territory by the end of this year or 1991 at the latest.

"There are no reasons, be it of political, military-security or arms control character, that would justify the stationing of foreign troops on the territory of Hungary," Foreign Ministry State Secretary Ferenc Somogyi told a news conference.

"Accordingly, the Hungarian government — fully supported by the Parliament and the public — persistently strives for the complete withdrawal this year or in 1991 at the latest of Soviet troops stationed in our country."

Somogyi, joint number two at the Foreign Ministry, said experts from the two sides would start talks on a schedule for withdrawal in the coming days. A senior Hungarian diplomat told Reuters he expected talks to begin before the end of January.

Somogyi said there were between 50,000 and 60,000 troops on Hungarian territory.

Poland says no

WARSAW, Jan 19, (Reuters): The Polish government said today that Solidarity leader Lech Walesa was voicing his own opinion when he called on the Soviet Union to remove all its troops from the country by the end of the year.

"This is an opinion of Mr Lech Walesa. We are not opening this issue now," the spokeswoman of the Solidarity-led government, Malgorzata Niczabitowska, told a news conference.

Walesa made the demand in talks with Soviet ambassador Vladimir Brovokov yesterday. He said the withdrawal would be a condition for reshaping relationship with the Soviet Union.

Brovokov, who visited Walesa in his home town Gdansk, invited him to visit Moscow and Solidarity sources said a meeting was envisaged with President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The sources said Walesa warned Brovokov that radicals may start street protests if talks on the withdrawal did not begin soon.

Niczabitowska said there was no change in the government's position on the Soviet military presence in Poland but did not elaborate.

Multi-candidate polls likely

Mongolia tinkers with political reforms

EAST BERLIN, Jan 19, (Reuters): Mongolia is considering multi-candidate elections that could loosen the Communist Party's stranglehold on Parliament, the official East German news agency ADN said today.

The agency, reporting from the Mongolian capital Ulan Bator, said authors of a draft election law wanted to scrap the present system of nominations to the Hural, or Parliament.

"The authors want to bring the running of the state nearer to the people and make it more accountable," ADN said, basing its report on Mongolian newspapers.

ADN correspondent Hugo Kroepelin said the draft law, under discussion for four weeks, could allow not only Communist Party cardholders but also members of trade unions and other state groups to stand for popular elections to Parliament.

"Individuals without group affiliation will also be able to stand for election," ADN said, but did not elaborate if this might include members of the fledgling opposition.

The authors of the law also wanted to reduce the role of the Mongolian Communist Party, which holds 95 per cent of seats in the Hural but whose members make up only 10 per cent of the electorate, ADN said.

Kroepelin reported that the draft law also envisaged reducing the government's role in the state and would split the Hural into separate chambers.

At present one-third of Mongolia's deputies were government ministers or heads of public concerns, while professionals such as engineers, agronomists and teachers made up only 7.3 per cent of the Hural.

A "Small State Hural", including about a third of the numbers in the current Parliament, would act as a check on the main body, to be called the "Large State Hural," ADN said.

Also today, an Ulan Bator resident told Reuters the authorities had banned all unauthorised demonstrations.

A newly formed opposition group, the Mongolian Democratic Union, organised a rally of about 5,000 people in the capital last Sunday and had planned another one this weekend.

It was not clear from the ADN report if the proposed changes in the political system had come in response to the first visible signs of mass discontent with the country's hardline leaders.

The ban was broadcast on state radio and television yesterday evening, said the resident, contacted by telephone from Beijing.

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Conscription in Kuwait successful: Nawaf

Naval, military academies under study

LONDON, Jan 19 (Kuna): Kuwait's Defence Minister Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber affirmed that his government, topped by H.H. the Amir and H.H. the Crown Prince and Premier Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, attaches great importance to upgrading its armed forces in all military facets.

Speaking in an interview with Arabic language London-based 'Al Hawadeth' magazine, Sheikh Nawaf hailed the military conscription experience in Kuwait as "successful" and helps remedy the shortage in manpower.

He affirmed that Kuwait recruits learn the basic arts of combat and that they are the reserves the country relies on in the time of need.

Sheikh Nawaf said that though the Kuwaiti Army requires the services of experts and technicians from advanced countries in the military field, "Kuwaiti nationals are our top priority."

Upgrade

The Kuwaiti minister affirmed that co-operation and co-ordination among the six Gulf states had existed long before the

establishment of the Gulf Co-operation Council, which helped enhance this co-operation further.

Sheikh Nawaf also expressed satisfaction at his recent visit to Cairo and said that he was proud at the level of production realised by Egyptian arms factories.

Furthermore, he said that Kuwait is keen to diversify its sources of arms in order to upgrade the efficiency and capabilities of the Kuwaiti Army.

Sheikh Nawaf once more stressed that Kuwait is a peace-loving country that "does not attack and does not want to

attack anyone and wants to preserve its existence, independence and land no matter what the consequences were."

Replying to a question on the Iraq-Iran war, Sheikh Nawaf said that the eight-year-war had incurred a great deal of harm to all countries of the region, particularly Kuwait, hoping that the two Muslim neighbours succeed in bridging the gaps between them to help restore security and prosperity to the area.

He disclosed that studies are underway to establish naval and military academies at the Gulf level.

Co-ops no competition to private sector: Khaled

Clampdown on price increases

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): Trade and Industry Minister Faissal Abdul Razzaq Al Khaled today dismissed charges that co-operative societies were stripping the private sector of a competitive edge and said a special committee is constantly seeking to unify co-op commodity prices.

Khaled, in an interview with Kuna, stressed that co-ops were chiefly involved in supplying basic commodities and not luxury items and durable goods and as such cannot be viewed as a formidable competition to shops and private traditional supermarkets.

Since co-ops count mainly on local suppliers for filling their shelves, the charge that the societies were competing with local traders and agents is not valid, the minister pointed out.

But he acknowledged that co-ops are allowed to import certain goods directly from the foreign supplier when the domestic market fails to meet the demand, for one reason or another.

The minister also refused charges that co-ops were imposing stringent conditions on local suppliers for marketing their goods and argued that since those societies were a major distribution outlet, they are taking part in activating the market and the economy in general.

Khaled said a special committee was set up solely to monitor commodity prices on co-op shelves and ensure that a given item would not have different price labels in two societies.

This, he said, would not mean that prices would be frozen because the committee is aware that prices hikes could be the result of a rise in costs at the supplier's end.

On whether the trade and industry ministry was planning

new marketing outlets Khaled said the ministry is continually watching trade activities and would not mind any potential marketing growth if proven economically feasible.

A local daily interviewed a number of co-operative societies directors and board chairmen to highlight the issue of free goods distributed among consumers and whether they affect the price of other commodities.

Salah Metah Al Rmaih, board member at Shaah Co-operative Society stated that the vast spread of free of charge goods results from agreements between importers and society officials. He added that such goods are distributed among consumers when commodities are displayed for sale for the first time at a particular society. He stated that such commodities which offer consumers free of charge goods when buying occupy a large shelf area and may not be sold as fast as expected which will deprive the co-operative from profits which may result from the circulation of other well-known brands.

As a result the co-operative society which displays such free goods is compensated by the importer in the form of free goods.

Rmaih added that a co-operative society may also receive free goods when buying huge quantities of any particular commodity. He stated that most of these commodities are not popular among consumers. Therefore, he stressed that the vast spread of such goods is mainly caused by societies and exporters together.

He indicated that consumers and share holders in particular are at a disadvantage adding that the only beneficiaries are co-op's

and merchants. He stated that consumers are directly affected by free goods because this reflects on increasing the price of other commodities, in order for the exporter and merchant to replace their loss.

He stated that the rise of commodities prices at co-operative societies are mainly caused by this phenomenon.

On the other hand, Mohammed Al Dahes, the general secretary of Shamiya and Shuwaikh Co-operative Society said that there is a direct link between the rise in prices and free goods. He therefore, supported cutting down prices against not receiving free goods.

Board Chairman of Sabah Al Salem Co-operative Society, Abdullah Fahel Al Ajmi stated that they only deal with the original agent of a particular product and rejected that free goods are the main cause behind the rise of prices.

In a related development the director of the Supply and Consumer Protection Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al Mulla has said that strict measures have been taken to ensure that no price increases were or would be arbitrarily made by shops and shopping centres in the wake of the recent pay increase to civil servants.

He told Kuna that contraventions will be penalised under the commercial penal code in force, and that 70 per cent of the total commodities available at co-ops had unified prices.

He urged people to "decline" buying any article whose price had been increased, so that they would not directly or indirectly contribute to the illegal manipulation of prices.

Pollution monitoring to continue unabated

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): A recent meeting by the environmental protection team has recommended continuation of monitoring of major causes of ecological pollution on coasts and other areas located away from human activities.

Dr Badreya Al Awadi, the general co-ordinator for technical and administrative affairs at the Regional Organization for Protection of Marine Environment (Ropme) told Kuna that the 8th meeting of the team in charge of technical side of programmes and research on marine pollution stressed the importance of continued monitoring of those areas to determine degrees of pollution, namely that resulting from poisonous minerals.

Dr Awadi said the meeting, concluded here last Wednesday, also called for more emphasis on chemical analysis to reach the best results regarding examination of pollution hazards.

The team also urged for compiling field studies and researches on waters of Hormuz Strait of the Arab Gulf and for conducting scientific trips on coasts of the region during the year 1992 using research vessels in addition to holding a special workshop on the use of satellites for determining characteristics and resources of the marine environment.

Dr Awadi said the meeting discussed arrangements for preparing the regional report on the marine environment which is to be based on studies formulated by each of the states of the region on their marine areas.

Kuwaitisation at municipality according to plan: Khaleefi

DIRECTOR of the Employees Affairs Department at Kuwait Municipality, Abdullah Al Khaleefi stated that he has a staff of 12733 employees, 5287 of whom are Kuwaitis.

With respect to the Kuwaitisation policy at the municipality, he said that it would require some time because it is directly linked with work and productivity.

He added that the Kuwaitisation policy at Kuwait Municipality is going on the right track and according to plan. It complies with specific fundamentals like replacing non-Kuwaiti employees with Kuwaitis. He stated that the Kuwaitisation policy is also linked with operation designated for training Kuwaiti employees.

He pointed out that some posts are constantly being Kuwaitised, particularly posts which become vacant (retirement) or those which become vacant by resignation. He indicated that those posts will be allocated to a Kuwaiti employee, particularly those who possess good qualifications.

Regarding posts which Kuwaitis are mostly not interested in, the director stated that such posts fall into technical categories, adding that such posts require special experience.

Khaleefi indicated that Kuwait Municipality follows the policy of reward and punishment towards employees adding that unproductive employees have no place with the organisation. Special rules and standards for censorship, follow up and evaluations are conducted on all employees.



Haroun at PAAET faculty

The Undersecretary at the Higher Education Ministry, Dr Mussaad Al Haroun, paid a visit to the Basic Education Faculty of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). The official was received by the dean of the faculty Dr Ghanem Sultan and his assistant Dr Ahmed Al Sarheed.

During his visit Dr Haroun inspected several departments and workshops of the faculty in addition to the science and computer laboratory. Picture shows the Undersecretary at the department of basic education.

Government housing

Vertical expansion only option to solve problem

THE Saving and Credit Bank integrates the role of the National Housing Authority (NHA), Youssef Al Houti, Chairman of the board and director general of the bank said and added that prior to the establishment of NHA in 1976, the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) carried out government housing projects.

The state was involved in allocating land to citizens and the bank granted them loans to build houses on these lands. The bank still grants loans of up to KD 54,000 for this purpose, the official said.

Houti speaking in a seminar organised by a local daily said that the bank faces no problems, but the NHA receives too many applications for government houses or land allotments.

He added that the present building system (villas) is going to be replaced by building of flats in the future due to the limited land area available for good housing projects.

The Sabwer flats were the first to be built by NHA, but these have been rejected by citizens, prompting the state to discontinue building flats in the new five-year plan. However, there is no other solution in the future, but to opt to build flats.

Also speaking at the seminar, Bader Al Mikhaizeem, director of real estates department at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) said that the house was the first financial establishment help people build their houses. The KFH had submitted a project to the Higher Council three years ago to contribute in offering housing services to citizens as the government alone could not meet all housing applications, the official said.

Meanwhile, the official said that the NHA is offering a government house or a land allotment to citizens with loans, but the problem lies in that citizens make major changes in their house as soon as they receive them from the NHA which is very expensive and is a waste of public money.

He added that citizens have no experience in building their houses by themselves. Realising this

fact, KFH in 1983 submitted a project which permitted citizens to take part in building their houses in co-operation with the NHA to avoid any future changes. Further, those citizens who desire to have changes made, could defray the extra costs and KFH would help citizens with these changes.

The official said that the KFH financed 1,200 applicants to build houses or purchased building materials during the last three years. The total amount invested by KFH amounted to KD 100 million, Mikhaizeem said.

Loans

On the other hand, the representative of EVA company for Financial Consultations, Bader Bu Rashed said that his company began an experiment to help people build their houses by providing loans and building houses in 1986. The company used to offer loans of KD 40,000 with low interest rates of 5.5 per cent.

During the period of construction, debtors were supposed to pay KD 250 as monthly installments. A house loan of KD 54,000 was provided by the Bank of Saving & Credit. The debtors have to pay the remainder of the loan amount over the next five years with an interest of 5.5 per cent. He added that the citizens could not pay the loan in five years. As the house was registered in the name of the company till the loan was paid up, and as the interest rate was very low, this was not profitable to the company.

Additionally, he said that the company was obliged to stop its activities after the increase of prices of land allotments. For instance, he said that in 1986 to 1988 the price of land allotment (500 square meters) was KD 50,000 on an average, but now land allotments cost about KD 70,000 in Salwa Area and KD 60,000 in Yarmouk Area while in Qortuba and Surra it reaches about KD 90 to 95,000.

If we give citizens loans to build their houses they would be asked to pay about KD 70,000 within five years which is impossible Mikhaizeem, concluded.

Zoonotic diseases seminar January 21

By Lima Al Khalefawi
Arab Times staff

ZOONATIC diseases and their effect on animal resources will be the main topic to be discussed Sunday at the Zoonotic Diseases Seminar, according to the Director of the Animal Department at the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, Dr Sultan Al Sultan.

The officials speaking during a press conference held at the authority's premises said that many factors cause such disease, the main being the susceptibility of the body and the surrounding environment. He added that foot and mouth disease could affect 90 per cent of cows while no similar symptoms appear among birds and human beings.

Sultan said that zoonotic diseases are very complicated because 70 per cent of human food depends on animal resources. The consumption of livestock is the highest compared to other food resources in Kuwait, the official said.

Complications

He added that the Middle East and the Gulf region still suffer from the problem of zoonotic diseases and a considerable percentage of people suffer from such diseases not only in Kuwait but the Gulf area in general.

Sultan said that the spread of the disease among cows and sheep is through the respiratory and digestive systems. The percentage of the disease affecting sheep and goats was 11.1 in 1987 as recorded during a campaign to combat brucellosis in goats and sheep. Also 395 people were afflicted with brucellosis in 1988.

The percentage of the disease dropped from 11 per cent in 1987 compared to 9.5 per cent in 1989 after the project to combat brucellosis was endorsed by the government, Sultan said.

Aids meet

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): The Information Committee, an affiliate of the Supreme Organising Committee of the third international conference on Aids, held its first meeting here yesterday and discussed a draft plan on an awareness campaign on Aids.

The international conference, to be held here February 12-14, is organised by the Kuwait Health Ministry in co-operation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, Kuwait University and the World Health Organisation.

Addiction should be treated, say specialists

YARMOUK Sport Club organised a seminar on the role of sports in fighting narcotics which was attended by Hawalli Governor Abdul Latif Al Barjes and a number of senior specialists.

Narcotic related crimes account for 25 per cent of total crimes in Kuwait during the last five years, Dr Ajeel Al Nashmi, dean of the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies said at the seminar.

The official said that until recently, Kuwaiti youths did not know of narcotics, but were introduced to this menace by the increase of expatriates in the country who brought with them diversified cultures and values.

He added that this is an international problem and should be treated by rehabilitating addicts and adjudging severe penalties for drug smugglers and dealers, including the death penalty.

Speaking from the religious view of fighting narcotics, Nashmi said that Islam is basically concerned in treating addiction as it treated the consumption of alcohol at the time of Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him). Islam took a decisive stand against liquor and also treated narcotics by education and self-control.

Also speaking on the issue, Abdul Majeed Khuraibet, director of studies and planning department at the Ministry of Interior said that the Arab strategy to fight narcotics is segregated into three regions.

The first consists of Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan which co-operate to fight narcotics that come from Turkey and Lebanon. The second relate to Arab Gulf states and the third, North

African states.

He added that planting of hashish increased in Lebanon during the present Civil War from 3,000 hectares to 20,000.

He stressed on the necessity to re-evaluate policies of fighting narcotics and urged members of society to actively participate in solving the problem.

Commenting on narcotic related crimes in Kuwait, he said that between 1985 and 1988, 25 Kuwaiti males and one Kuwaiti woman were arrested for addiction, 354 Kuwaiti men and 17 Kuwaiti women were arrested for trading, 16 non-Kuwaiti men and one non-Kuwaiti woman were apprehended for addiction and 608 non-Kuwaiti men and 47 women were arrested for trading in narcotics during the same period. He added that 206 foreigners, including two women were deported from Kuwait for narcotic related crimes according to judicial sentences and 208, including 8 women were deported for the same offence on an administrative basis.

Meanwhile, Dr Mustafa Johar Hayat said that sport clubs can play an active role in protecting youths from addiction through their cultural, sporting, and entertainment programmes. The sport clubs work to develop the sporting and physical fitness of their members by giving concern to the health environment of the members. The clubs are also concerned in offering healthy meals for them to build their bodies and warning players from some bad habits like addiction and smoking, he said.

GCC states to witness quantum boost in 90's: official

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): The 90's decade will witness a boost to the march of the Gulf Co-operation Council and increase in the joint measures that would be in interest of the citizens of the six members states, a ranking GCC official said today.

In an interview with a local daily, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs of the GCC Dr Abdullah Al Quwaiz predicted that foreign ministers of the GCC and the European Economic Community would

meet in Muscat, but gave no date for this conference which he said is due to discuss implementing of an agreement concluded between the two groupings in 1988.

On the international changes that took place over the past few months, Quwaiz said they would positively reflect on the GCC states in the economic field, explaining that the changes would result in higher demand on oil and gas.

He urged for speeding up efforts toward uniting the Gulf

market so as to face the adverse affects of the international changes, topped by the east-west detente, the single European market in 1992 and the developments in Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, an economical study stressed that Gulf Co-operation Council states have immense capabilities to develop pharmaceutical industries.

The study which was conducted by Emirates Industrial Bank indicated the existence of three factories which produce medicine in GCC countries. The

first was established in the early 1980's in the United Arab Emirates, then a factory in Kuwait followed by a factory in Saudi Arabia which will start production during the first half of the next year.

Some of these factories produce several types of medicines and pharmaceutical preparations including regular pills, sterilisers, creams and antibiotics.

At this initial stage, product types are limited, but, expecta-

tions indicate that such factories have enough capabilities to develop productivity which may cover sixty per cent of GCC states requirements of medicines during late 1990's.

The study stressed that to bring success to this industry, several difficulties have to be removed particularly providing the pharmaceutical industry with protection against other imported products, in addition to registering these manufactured medicines at ministries and official establishments.

WITHIN the framework of a symposium organised by the Kuwait Medical Society to discuss the proposed medical insurance against medical errors, a committee of ten doctors was formed to study the proposals.

Members of the committee included the secretary-general of Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialisations Dr Abdullah Al-Rafai, Head of the Gynaecology and Maternity Division at the Maternity Hospital Dr Mamoun Al Haj, General Surgery Specialist at Sabah Hospital Dr Majeed Olwan and others.

Dr Rafai opened the symposium by outlining the proposed medical insurance idea, reviewing the basic parameters and variables in the medical sphere which brought forth the medical insurance concept.

He said that practising doctors were liable to make unintentional mistakes and added that with rapid development of highly sophisticated medical technologies, the rate of errors increase. Patients were now more aware of the need to protect themselves against medical mistakes, amidst increasing complaints against doctors and consequently this heightens the need to afford doctors protection.

Protection

He pointed out that the idea is to provide doctors with needed professional protection against malpractice suits to enhance their psychological comfort by knowing that there is a special body entrusted with providing professional protection to practising doctors against mistakes.

He added that a number of offers had been made by local insurance companies to the Ministry of Public Health which were currently under consideration. Once the proposed insurance system became operational, it would be the first of its kind in the Third World, and Kuwait would be the first country in the region to apply this system.

The head of the Gynaecology and Maternity Division at the Maternity Hospital Dr Mamoun Al Haj said that the proposed system would give rise to a number of issues which would demand urgent attention. Would the proposed insurance cover doctors collectively, or individually, would the value of

the insurance vary according to the different specialisations of doctors, would they be recompensed commensurate with part of their salaries paid as instalments towards their insurance coverage and others.

He said that the project would result in uncalled-for financial pressure on doctors, if local commercial insurance companies should undertake this project. He commented that it would be most advisable that the Kuwait Medical Society undertook the formation of a special medical co-operative authority to protect doctors against professional hazards, other than professional mistakes.

The general surgery consultant at the Sabah Hospital Dr Majeed Olwan said that speedy measures were to be taken against increasing number of lawsuits by patients against doctors, stressing the right of patients to equality with doctors.

He said that doctors would have to be protected against informational exploitation and scandal made by credit-seeking newspapers which would result in a negative response and hesitation to take necessary treatment decisions, particularly when patients of critical conditions were involved. These constraints would badly affect the medical performance and profession, the official said.

Rights

He also said that it was therefore highly important to seriously consider the best approach available to doctors used for self-defence, the existing ministry-doctor relation, doctors' rights and ministry duties, and the agency to be entrusted with insurance against professional medical mistakes.

The director of the Hadi Hospital Dr Ahmad Mntawe said that the insurance systems existing at his hospital demanded no obligations from lab workers or nurses, but received KD 15 from medical advisors per month, and KD 5 from resident doctors while the hospital bore 90 per cent of the value of the insurance.

He stressed the element of high personal vigilance against committing mistakes, adding that it was important to ensure the development of existing doctor-colleague relations.

Action Line

I AM a driver in a private company. In September 1988, I was involved in an accident while driving my company car, on duty. The car was heard in December, 1988, and the court fined me and suspended my driving licence for one week.

After about a year, the insurance company has been claiming payment against the damage caused to the other car. I would like to know if I am supposed to pay their claim.

J. Chacko

THIS depends on several factors like the judgement given by the court, who the owner of the other car was, and who made the insurance claim. In most cases, such compensation can be limited, in most cases the third party has the right to claim compensation. A negotiated settlement can also be made with an arrangement to pay the compensation in instalments.

I CAME to Kuwait in June 1989 under the sponsorship of a private company on visa No. 18, and have been employed ever since. Now I got a better offer in a public sector company and I want to join them. My present employer will not give me a release. Please advise me how I can leave my present employer and join the public sector company under the Kuwaiti Labour Law.

N.C.

THE Kuwait Labour Law specifically mentions the restriction on the movement of labour from one sponsor to another. No employee has the right to seek a transfer until he has completed three years service with one employer, according to article 16 of the Labour Law, March, 1989.

You joined your employer in June 1989, and have yet to complete three years service to be eligible to ask for a transfer of residence.

A transfer of residence from the private to the public sector depends on the agreement of both the present and the new employer. The public sector employee must express his willingness to employ and sponsor you. Then, an application must be submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, which reserves the right to accept or reject an application.

In other words, you cannot change your job unless you have completed three years service with the present employer, and are eligible for a transfer of residence.

If the public sector company provides a fresh entry permit, you can cancel the present visa and come back on the new one.

I AM a Bangladeshi national living in Kuwait since 1947. I worked with some reputed companies and have enclosed documentary evidence. Initially, I was employed by the public sector and then continued working in the private sector. It is my earnest desire to get a Kuwaiti nationality as I have spent most of my life in this country. I have a clean record. I was born in 1929.

S.K.

THE issue of nationality is examined by the Ministry of Interior. You can submit an application to that ministry, explaining all the circumstances of your arrival, employment history and your desire to stay here. It is up to the ministry to take a decision. After submitting an application, you'll have to wait for their reply and act according to their advice.

MY maid is trying to blackmail me with a letter that she took from my possession during my absence. She has handed over a threat to me in the form of a letter, written by her, and I feel I have substantial proof. I am aware that blackmailing is a serious offence and I would appreciate if you could advise me through your column what course of action I should take.

N.

YOU did not tell me the nature of the blackmail case. What you can take is the matter of the blackmail case. The nature of the threat. However, in most cases, such incidents can be handled by the police. I suggest you contact the nearest police station, giving them details of the case and the name of the person blackmailing you. The police will take care of the matter.

I AM a Filipino domestic. I came to Kuwait in 1987 and worked with my first employer for 22 months. Five months after my arrival, I developed an allergy and the doctors advised me not to wash my hands with soap and water. Despite the disease, I continued to work. My employer was aware of my problem and when my term of duty ended, she asked me if I wanted to continue working in Kuwait or return home. As I have a large family to support, I said I wanted a release.

A friend of mine told me she'll get me a job with her employer and I'll not have to do cooking and washing. But I was cheated. After transferring, I came to know that I'm doing the same job, and when the second employer came to know of my allergy, she phoned the first employer and asked them to take me back. My first employer now wants me to go home, or pay some money to get my passport and release. I don't want to go back. Please tell me what to do.

Filipino

IF you want to stay here, and can find another employer willing to sponsor you, you can file a case in to get a release. When you file the case, you'll have to give the name of the new employer, and his address, saying that he will sponsor you. If this can be arranged, you can get your residence transferred. If not, you can find an employer who'll give you a fresh visa, cancel the present one, return to your country and come back.

I HEARD from one of my friends that from January 1990, if we deposit some amount of money in the Indian embassy, then we can get a family visa. I need your help to know how far this is true. If it is true, please let me know the exact amount.

Tony Allick

YOU must be aware that a visa to enter Kuwait can only be issued by the government of this country. A visa for Kuwait can be issued by the Kuwaiti embassy in a foreign country. No foreign embassy in Kuwait has the authority to issue visas for families.

An Indian diplomat said there is no scheme under which a person can deposit a sum of money to get a family visa. The Indian embassy, however, provides attestation facilities for relationship affidavits, required by the Kuwaiti immigration while issuing family visas. To attest an affidavit, a nominal fee is charged.

KU administration being optimised

THE director of the research, development and follow-up department at Kuwait University Sulaiman Nasser has said that the central function of the department was to optimise administrative performance at all departments to provide high quality services.

He told a local daily that it is important to discuss and determine the factors of strength and weakness in the existing administrative structures. These would then be taken into consideration when preparing a plan to upgrade the existing levels.

He said that the department by doing so would serve all departments of the university, and that it was not pursuing a unilateral line of action but led a collective approach to perform the tasks based on the results of opinion

poll of the relevant department heads.

He said that no problems faced the working of his department due to the continuous attention and support from the higher administration at the university. Similar co-operation and coordination was also effected with the personnel of the departments concerned.

The department would develop training programmes to improve the level of administrative performance and that a fully-fledged programme had already been developed for training in computer use.

Banks merger proposal requires clear policies: Ahmad

Local banks will face adversity in 1992

THE intended sought after merger of some local banks should be preceded with clear predefined policies and objectives, Sheikh Ahmad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, chairman of Bursan Bank said.

He cautioned of the adverse effects the unification of the EEC will cause local banks and in the region in general on an economic basis and added that local banks will be hard pressed to compete with international banks due to their very inherent international stance and undisclosed financial resources.

Sheikh Ahmad who was commenting on wide-spread ongoing trends to merge some commercial banks and financial institutions to face international developments, said that Bursan Bank had not received any intimation, neither did the major

shareholder, Public Investment Authority have any indication of such a proposal.

Approval

He said that the recommendations for merger had been issued

by the economic committee in its last report. However, banks cannot take unilateral decisions, without the approval of the general assemblies.

The official disclosed that present laws do not permit the envisaged form of merger,

neither was the Bursan Bank represented on the committee when the merger proposal was discussed. Prior to any merger, banks will have to clear their positions, as well as obtain the approval of the shareholders. Sheikh Ahmad said.



Handicrafts at Safat Square

General Director of the Public Utilities Management Company, Abdul Rahman Mubarak Al Quodh has announced that the company will use passages of Safat Square for the display of Kuwaiti products and will specify a day to sell Kuwaiti handicrafts.

He stated that the company administration will exert serious efforts to activate Safat Square which is considered to be one of the utilities run by the company.

He stressed the historical value of Safat Square to the Kuwaiti society indicating that the square was frequently used by overland caravan and merchants.

The director-general pointed out that the company has invited concerned parties to use Safat Square passages by putting glass fronts to display Kuwaiti products. He added that the company had previously held a day to revive the heritage of Safat Square and that this activity will be held on an annual basis.

He explained that the company has conducted a field study to modernise a market for vehicles and called upon establishing more vehicles sale lots at a number of governorates. Quodh also stressed on the importance of reorganising the current sheep market.

Foodstuff prices may jump by 33pc

By Fatima Ahmed
Arab Times Staff

FOODSTUFF and consumer products' costs are expected to jump by as much as 33 per cent in the next few months, according to market sources.

Tea and rice are two products that are expected to cost more in addition to several European products. Suppliers of leading brands of tea have asked the Co-operative Societies Union, which fixes prices, to hike tea prices between 10 and 20 per cent, according to sources. This request was made much earlier than the announcement of an increase in public sector salaries on Jan 8, sources pointed out.

There are reports that the government may remove the subsidy on certain products like rice. If this happens, the price of rice would also go up, sources added. Kuwait imports about 40 million metric tons of rice per year, and pays between 15 and 20 per cent subsidy on the product.

Prices have already risen on hundreds of consumer products by between eight and 27 per cent over last year. Retailers expect a steady increase in prices over the next few months.

Inflation, which was 1.5 per cent in 1988, has risen to 3.4 per cent. Economists say "there is no inflation in conventional terms" and describe the rising prices in Kuwait as "a form of imported inflation."

Co-operative societies, corner grocers and leading stores have uniformly hiked prices on such products as milk and milk products, facial tissues, canned food, soap, oil, paper plates and hundreds of other consumer products.

The cost of canned foodstuff went by 22.2 per cent; corn oil by 27.3 per cent; milk and milk products by 16.5 per cent. A gallon of corn oil, which was KD 1.880, a carton of long-life KDD milk went up from 255 to 265 fils; Nido-Nestle powder milk rose from KD 2.595 to KD 2.995, a hike of 16.5 per cent and long-life milk cost 8.3 per cent dearer.

For example, the cost of KDD long-life milk has gone up from 255 to 265 fils, a hike of 10 fils. Ma Ling canned vegetables cost 110 fils, up from 95 fils a few months ago, an increase of 15 fils; a 100-teabag Lipton carton has risen from 895 to 910 fils (one store still sells it for 895 fils); Carnation evaporated milk can is up from 60 to 65 fils in some stores and costs 70 fils in the co-ops. Sugar price went up from 370 fils to 430 fils, a hike of 16.2 per cent. A 50 kg sack of sugar costing KD 4.950 in early 1989 is now priced at KD 7.650.

The price of local products like

facial tissues, salt, air fresheners and macaroni has remained stable; local products are also the cheapest in the market.

Vikram Bablani, assistant store manager of Sultan Center, who has been in the business for four years expects the costs to rise further. "Unless it is a local product, prices will go up higher and higher," said Bablani.

Safeway's store manager Osama Abdul Karim Mustafa, however, is more articulate and expects a flat 33 per cent increase in the cost of many consumer items, including milk and milk products.

Osama, who has been in the consumer products business for the last 29 years, gives the example of Nido milk. This is one product that rose by 400 fils over last year's prices. Osama expects Nido prices to go up to KD 4 in the next few months.

"The cost of 99 per cent of the items has gone up with a 10 to 15 per cent hike in the price of consumer items," said Osama.

"I hope prices won't rise, but they will," said Osama. "In the last four years, I haven't seen prices falling but I have seen them rising," added Bablani.

Osama says that if prices are to remain stable, suppliers must cut hike costs. "We raise prices only when our costs go up, and this happens if suppliers raise prices," he said.

Osama explained that most suppliers increase prices due to a hike in the cost of European products, fluctuating exchange rates and the rising import costs.

Stores and co-ops alter consumer item prices at regular intervals. Some stores do it weekly, others fortnightly. Hike in prices varies between a minimum of five fils and a maximum of 15 fils. The price differential is so minor that most consumers do not notice it. But when they pay their monthly bill, they find they are paying much more than they did a month before.

One consumer said: "Previously, my total grocery bill was KD 35 a month; now I pay that sum for one trip to the co-op and have to return in the middle of the month to replenish stock."

Another consumer said she was not so sure prices had gone up. "I've never noticed the rise as I do not compare prices," she said.

The pricing policy of most stores and co-ops is fairly uniform due to controls by the Co-operative Societies Union and the Consumer Protection Department. No store can hike prices unilaterally; price changes are made after providing ample proof in an increase by producer countries.

Retailers claim their margin of profit is 10 per cent on groceries; 12 to 15 per cent on fresh fruit and vegetables; 15 per cent on frozen food and 20 to 25 per cent on cosmetics. When a supplier raises his prices, the retailers adjust it according to the profit margins, explained retailers.

Co-ops and major stores compete by offering competitive prices, which are often a few fils lower.

Noel D'Souza, who monitors prices at the Sultan Center, said: "We are not increasing prices on food items; we cannot go higher than co-ops."

Prices at Sultan Center are a few fils lower than at co-ops. For example, Lipton 100 teabags cost 895 fils at the Sultan Center; co-op prices is 910 fils. There is a 10 to 15 fils price differential in the cost of Mazola corn oil, Kuwait flour, vinegar and Carnation milk, all described as fast-selling items.

The rise in prices has not reflected substantially on sales, which have gone up between five to seven per cent. Safeway's Osama Mustafa has noticed that customers have become cost conscious and have cut down consumption.

"If a consumer uses two Nido tins per month, they have cut it down to one and a half; this trend is noticeable on other items as well," he said.

Asked if the announcement of a hike in social allowances in the public sector would reflect on prices, Osama said: "The Co-operative Societies Union and the Consumer Protection Department monitor prices and if they want to maintain market vitality, they should not increase prices." He said this also applied to suppliers.

The director of the supply and consumer protection department at the Ministry of Commerce believes "prices have not gone up." He also said he expected a moderate increase in the price of "non-essential" items.

China may launch third Arab satellite

Authority needs financial backing

PARIS, Jan 19, (Kuna): The Arab Authority for Satellite Communications, ArabSat, will most likely choose China to launch its third satellite into space, industrial sources said here yesterday.

The sources told the Kuwait News Agency that the Chinese offer for launching the satellite is "economically wise" for the Arab group, saying it would cost a third of what the European consortium, ArianeSpace, would charge.

ArianeSpace, the sources said, normally charges about \$100 million for launching a rocket carrying commercial satellites and placing them in space.

The third Arab orbiter, ArabSat-3, was manufactured by the French space group, ArianeSpace, and is now waiting for the launching decision.

An Arab eight member ministerial committee concluded meetings in Oman yesterday

after discussing, among a host of issues, the tenders given by China and the European consortium for launching the satellite.

The two other Arab satellites, also manufactured by ArianeSpace, were launched in the mid 1980's by ArianeSpace and a US space shuttle.

Communications ministers and the members of the special ArabSat ministerial committee, co-located sitting here after two days of discussions on launching the third Arab satellite and other topics.

Omani post, telegram and telephone minister, chairman of the meeting, Ahmad Bin Suwaidan Al Bloushi said that the conferees have discussed a report by director of the Arab Organisation for Satellite Communications (ArabSat) on the two offers by China and France to carry the third Arab satellite.

He pointed out that the conferees have exchanged technical views on the issue and assigned

the board of directors and current chairman of the organisation's plenary session to preselect their final say on the launching, affirming that the matter will be decided within few coming days.

Bloushi said that no date was fixed for the launching, noting that it should be determined by ArabSat's executive committee and the company that will carry out the operation.

He noted that the committee endorsed a number of recommendations giving more flexibility to the organisation's board of directors, but ruled out that in the near future the organization would be turned into a commercial company.

He stressed that the organisation was still in need of financial backing by the Arab countries.

The committee groups the PTT ministers of Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Morocco, Iraq, Syria and Jordan.

Saudis send 1.6m holy books to USSR

JEDDAH, Jan 19, (AP): A gift of 1.6 million copies of the Quran, the Muslim holy book, is to be shipped to the Soviet Union by King Fahd, the weekly "Al Muslimoon" reported yesterday.

Quoting the secretary-general of the Makkah-based Muslim World League, Dr Abdullah Omar Naseef, the paper said that the national Soviet airline Aeroflot quotes a competitive price, it will be allowed to fly to Saudi Arabia to airlift the consignment.

The ultra-religious kingdom has so far refrained from having diplomatic relations with any communist nation.

Naseef said it was the first consignment of Islamic books to the Soviet Union since the country lifted a long-standing ban on Islamic and Christian literature last summer. The move was part of the Perestroika policy of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Arrangements to "Al Muslimoon," which is published in the Saudi port city of Jeddah, the 1.6 million Qurans are ready for the Muslims of the Soviet Union, of which 600,000 are in a variant of Turkish spoken in Turkistan language while the other million are in Arabic, the original language of the holy book.

All the books were printed in Saudi Arabia.

Contract

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): Minister of Public Services Abdul Rahman Al Houti yesterday signed a contract with a local company for the supply and maintenance electricity complex project of the Amir Diwan and the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

The contract costs KD65,000 and is to be completed within 999 days.

Interest of nation above all: Jaber

LONDON, Jan 19, (Kuna): Kuwait Information Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah said that the Amir's Decree to dissolve the Parliament in 1986 has put the interest of the nation and the citizens above all considerations and has included the real reasons for this decision.

The Kuwaiti minister added in an interview with "Al Hawadeth" magazine, published here, that the parliamentary experience in Kuwait has its positive and negative aspects, noting that the negative aspect has overcome the positive side of this experience.

He said that Kuwait was a pioneer in having real experience in parliamentary life.

Regarding the demand for the return of parliament in Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber said that this is an Amir's affair and it is HH the Amir who decides what is the best for the interest of his people.

Asked on the control over the newspapers in Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber said that this step came to protect the state's security and for the interest of the people and the country particularly under the developments that were witnessed in the region.

He clarified that the control over the papers is not to limit the freedom of the press, pointing out that Kuwaiti newspapers still have a big freedom of expression and have a distinguished place in the Arab region.

King Faisal awards Saudi and Pakistani share top award

RIYADH, Jan 19, (AP): Sheikh Ali Al Tantawi, a prominent theologian in Saudi Arabia and Dr Khurshid Ahmad of Pakistan were jointly awarded the top prize of the annual King Faisal International Prize Committee yesterday.

The top prize goes for services contributed to the field of Islam. Ahmad is head of the International Institute for Islamic Economy Studies at the University of Islamabad.

University Professors Muhammad Omar A Shabara, a Saudi economic counsellor with the Saudi Monetary Agency, and As-Seddiq M. Ad-Darir, a Sudanese professor of Islamic Sharia or law at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, shared the prize for Islamic studies for their studies on financial dealings as prescribed by Islam.

The elderly Egyptian short story writer Yahya Haqqi got the prize for Arabic literature, according to the list announced by Prince Khaled Al Faisal.

Efforts

Professor Andre Capron, 59, of France, director of the Centre for Immunology of Parasites at the Institut Pasteur in Lille, France, and Dr Anthony Edward Butterworth, 44, of Britain, an associate lecturer at the department of pathology, Cambridge University, shared the prize for medicine for their studies on parasitical diseases, specifically Schistosomiasis.

Professor Raymond Urgel Lemieux, 69, a Canadian Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta, Professor Frank Albert Cotton, 58, of the Department of Chemistry at Texas A-and-M University, and Professor Mustafa Amr El-Sayed of the United States shared the prize in science for their efforts in the field of chemistry.

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ARAB TIMES

Thought for today

DO what you feel in your heart to be right — for you'll be criticised anyway — Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, US States-women (1884-1962).

Palestinians in new peace bid

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, (Reuters): Frustrated by what they see as Israeli government stalling on peace efforts, Palestinians in the occupied territories plan to reach out directly to the Israeli public.

"We have concentrated on the American position long enough when the decision will be made in Israel," said communist academic Ghassan Al Khatib, one of a new generation of leaders.

Responding to a call from nationalist leader Faisal Hussein to reach out to Israelis in the third year of the uprising against occupation, Palestinians say they want to convince Israeli voters to press their leaders to talk with the PLO.

They are searching for new ways to go beyond preaching to the converted and reach beyond the Israeli left.

Hussein, banned from leaving the country or entering the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, set an example last week by visiting in hospital an Israeli crippled by a lone Palestinian's attack on an Israeli bus last June, in which 16 Jews died.

Hussein has also addressed rallies of the left-wing Peace Now Movement and held talks with a prominent Jewish settler rabbi who lives in the West Bank.

Israel's refusal to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organisation has emerged as a major obstacle to a US plan to convene Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo.

Palestinians say they have been encouraged by opinion polls showing increased support in Israel for talks with the PLO.

"Polls show half of the Israeli public support talking with the PLO. We need to work on the other half. If we can win 15 or 20 per cent to our side, it will be a victory," said Mahdi Abdul Hadi, head of the Palestinian foreign policy think-tank Passia.

Spurred by 25 months of revolt, Palestinians say they feel better equipped to understand Israeli fears and concerns.

They acknowledge a past failure to address Israeli anxieties which they say enabled right-wing Israelis to show mistrust.

Although the PLO has recognised Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism, many Israelis doubt its sincerity.

"There is a great lack of knowledge and dehumanisation of Palestinians," said Janet Aviad, a Peace Now Activist and veteran organiser of Palestinian-Israeli meetings.

"Rightists capitalise on the suspicions and fears of ordinary Israelis to stop the circle of peace seekers from growing," said Zaid Abu Zayyad, editor of the Palestinian Hebrew-language Geshet newspaper.

A veteran supporter of Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, Abu Zayyad said many more Israelis actually supported talking to the PLO, but didn't speak out because of fear and mistrust.

"Feel off mistrust and fear and you will find a large number of Israelis who support talking to the PLO," he said.

Reluctant to disclose specific plans, Palestinian leaders want to try to alleviate Israeli fears and mistrust.

Peace Now and Palestinian nationalists, along with European activists, held an unprecedented human chain demonstration around the walled Old City of Jerusalem on December 30.

Palestinians say more such activities could be part of their drive to reach out to Israelis.

"We want to go to their homes, farms and institutions," said Abdul Hadi who recently accepted his first speaking engagement at an Israeli university.

Other Palestinians have addressed Israeli gatherings in religious school and collective farms in central and northern Israel in recent weeks.

Palestinians to run weekly columns by Arab writers.

Israeli activists say the Palestinian approach, along with more, good-will gestures, could achieve results, especially since many Israelis believed the uprising had demonstrated Israel's inability to hold the West Bank and Gaza Strip indefinitely.

Amiram Goldblum, a Peace Now spokesman, said a greater focus on non-violent forms of resistance, such as civil disobedience, could contribute to winning broader Israeli support.

"Most Israelis are now convinced that Israel cannot rule the occupied territories forever," said veteran Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein. "But they differ on what to do with them."

Syria moderates Mideast stance

CAIRO, (UPI): Syria, which spearheaded the Arab boycott of Cairo more than a decade ago, is softening its stance on ongoing Mideast peace efforts as part of the price it has to pay to remain within the mainstream of the Arab world, government officials and diplomats have said.

"Syria cannot stand in the way of current Mideast peace efforts, because it needs to avoid becoming isolated, at a time when the Arab world is moving closer together," one Egyptian Foreign Ministry source said.

"Syria alone cannot stand in the way of the changes that are sweeping the world," the Foreign Ministry source told United Press International in a telephone interview. "They themselves have admitted this."

Western diplomats saw Syria's surprise resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt last month, as a further indication that Damascus has softened its stance toward both the mainstream Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation — which has recognised Israel's right to exist — and Egypt's US-sponsored and currently deadlocked efforts to push forward Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

"Both the United States and France have been working on softening Syria, and ensuring it does not block any Mideast peace formula that may be worked out with Egyptian help, between Israel and the Palestinians," one European envoy said.

Tayeb Abdel Rahman, the PLO's Ambassador to Jordan, said the rapprochement between Egypt and Syria had removed a major obstacle to the staging of an international Mideast peace conference in Cairo.

"We hope all obstacles would be removed in order to convene this Arab meeting, particularly after the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement, which (eliminated) a major obstacle," Abdel Rahman said.

Also Wednesday, PLO leader Yasser Arafat laid out terms for an improvement of relations with Syria. In remarks published in the Cairo-based weekly magazine Al Mawsat, Arafat said Damascus should release all Palestinian prisoners, refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the PLO, and it should acknowledge past PLO decisions, such as Arafat's statement recognising Israel's right to exist and his renunciation of terrorism.

But the main stumbling block to US Secretary of State James Baker's five-point Mideast peace plan appears to stem not so much from quarrels within the Arab camp, but from Israeli reluctance to deal with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

"Both Syria and Libya, two former radical opponents of moderate Egypt and (Yasser) Arafat's PLO, are now racing to outdo each other when it comes to friendly ties with Cairo," the envoy added.

Syrian leader Hafez Assad led the Arab boycott of Egypt after late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1977.

Disputes could trigger upheavals Mideast water supply under population strain

NICOSIA, (AP): The Middle East's water supply, more important to the arid region than oil, is being strained by a mushrooming population, raising fears that disputes over the precious resource could trigger what one study termed "unprecedented upheaval."

"The scarcity of water resources adds to the complexity of the Middle East region and renders it a conflict-laden issue on both domestic and international levels," Prof. Elias Salameh of Jordan University's Water Research and Study Centre said recently.

The crisis came sharply into focus last Saturday, when Turkey blocked off much of the water in the 1,460-mile (2,330-kilometre) Euphrates River that flows southward through Syria and Iraq to the Gulf.

To punish of "Allah is Great," President Turgut Ozal pushed a button that lowered an 87-tonne concrete plug into the diversion channel under the dam, the fifth largest in the world.

Despite Iraqi and Syrian protests, the Turks will staunch the flow for one month to fill up the reservoir for the giant Ataturk Hydroelectric Dam in southeastern Anatolia province, centerpiece of a massive irrigation and development programme to aid the impoverished region.

Ankara gave Damascus and Baghdad several weeks' warning, and even increased the flow of water before the cut-off to compensate.

But the Turkish move underlined to Syria and Iraq just how vulnerable their water supply is — as if they needed to be reminded.

Baghdad's Al Thawra daily, mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Arab Socialist Party, warned that the long-term fall in the Euphrates flow could cause "a real agricultural disaster" in Iraq, affecting 1.3 million hectares (3.2 million acres) of prime farmland in the Mesopotamian basin, the country's foodbasket.

It warned that if Turkey does not share the Euphrates water, "relations could be harmed."

Growing industrial development and increasingly crowded cities in the region have heightened demand for water in recent years. The problem has been intensified by severe droughts over the last decade, with five of six hottest years this century.

Egyptian economist Mostafa El Said, a former economy minister, noted in an interview: "Water is more important than oil in this region. The question of water resources is extremely acute and it is vital that Arab countries tackle it and co-ordinate their policies."

Scientists say not enough is being done to avert disaster in the future. Proposals to alleviate the problem range from a Turkish proposal for a \$21-billion "peace pipeline" to carry water for sale 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometres) south to the Arabian peninsula, to towing icebergs from the Antarctic to Saudi Arabia, to desalinating sea water.

For most countries, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, desalination plants on the scale needed are simply too expensive.

"The demand for water is expected to significantly increase in the coming decades. In this over-heated atmosphere of political hostilities, complicated by insufficient water to meet the needs of developing societies, the latent tensions may develop into domestic conflicts and expand to regional ones," Salameh told the Arab press service seminar on Middle East strategy until the year 2002.

"Water will determine the future of the Middle East," he stressed. "The population of the region will double by the year 2010. We need twice as much water as we have now."

There are an estimated 210 million Arabs now spread across 22 countries. The population is grow-

Omanis tap water from fog

SALALAH, Oman, (AP): Research scientists have a heaven-sent gift for Oman's mountain tribesmen who pray for rain in the remote southern province of Dhofar.

Three experts from Canada and Chile have shown the "Jabal" or mountain dwellers, how to draw moisture from fog to produce drinking water for their families and livestock.

The scientists collect the fog's mist by extrusion, said Mohamed Ghassani, secretary of Dhofar's Environmental Planning Committee.

The mist condenses on wire mesh screens called "interceptors," then trickles down into a container for storage.

A small pilot project yielded 40,000 litres (16,280 gallons) of water during the last monsoon in Dhofar, more than 10 times the quantity nature would have provided, he noted.

"Preliminary results are encouraging. Experiments confirm the technology definitely works. We're now planning for this year's operation and optimistically preparing for the coming monsoon in June," Ghassani said.

The project design team, backed by the United Nations Development Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and Unesco, comprises Dr Richard Schemenauer of the Canadian Atmospheric Environment Service, and geographers Prof. Pilar Cereceda and Juan Barros from Chile's Catholic University.

Oman, the second largest country in the Gulf, lies on the southeastern

tip of the Arabian peninsula. The sultanate flanks the great desert belt that stretches from the west coast of Africa through the Sahara to Arabia, Pakistan and China.

Southwest trade winds blow from the Indian Ocean across the southern coast, trailing a veil of monsoon cloud over Dhofar's mountains from June to September.

Dhofar accounts for one-third of the sultanate's area of 300,000 square kilometres (115,800 square miles), with a population estimated at 1.5 million, including the bedouins of the central desert.

To the northwest, the Dhofar region's border with Saudi Arabia runs through the plateau area known as the Empty Quarter.

Dhofar's fertile alluvial soil is well watered for four months by the monsoon cloud. But supplies of water for drinking and other domestic needs are less accessible for the tribal communities who live in the tree-dotted mountains 1,500 metres (4,900 feet) above the coastal plain around the southern capital Salalah.

Climbing high into the mountains, the scientists worked with Omani environmentalists to erect interceptors and water retention mechanisms in strategic hillside locations.

Harvesting the monsoon cloud synthetically to provide a water supply for the Jebel and their crops and cattle had not been considered feasible until now, a development fund spokesman said in the capital, Muscat.

"Exactly how much of this plentiful atmospheric phenomenon can

be collected before it's dissipated across the Nigd desert is currently under study," he explained.

"Investigations are under way as to how feasible, indeed how viable, the project actually is. But we're impressed with what's been achieved so far. It's exciting, innovative work," he said.

The Omanis have traditionally found tree branches to be good interceptors, he said.

Planted in arid regions, they could be very productive. Initial findings appear to justify large-scale tree planting across watershed zones.

The Jebel used clay basins placed under trees to collect water. They say this will continue, but they are also showing great interest in the new methods.

UN officials said they were not aware of similar experiments being conducted in other Gulf countries, but said fog water retention is of increasing environmental interest in Chile and other parts of South America.

Small desalination plants have been established in Dhofar, which has a large reservoir of water under the Salalah Plain.

In the more remote areas, two systems of seawater desalination are employed, both utilizing the same reverse osmosis technology.

"We understand fog water retention could be a relatively less expensive, complementary alternative and look forward to seeing the results of further experiments," a Water Resources Ministry spokesman said.

ing at an average of three per cent a year.

Water has historically been a source of conflict in the Middle East. Ancient civilisations flourished around the region's major rivers, the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris and they had to fight to keep control of them. Without water there was no life.

The people of the Middle East "have learned to live with meagre water resources, adapting their cultures and even their conflicts to this basic commodity," Salameh noted.

But he said the region was not trapped in a "vicious circle" — the only way to cover the increasing demand for water is by curtailing the share of irrigation water for agriculture, which in turn is in bad need of water to supply food for an increasing population.

Syria and Iraq, bitter rivals in the Arab world, face a common threat from Turkey's plans to harness the Euphrates.

Iraq depends on the river for much of its water for electricity generation and irrigation, but can fall back on the Tigris.

Syria, however, is totally reliant on the Euphrates and any curtail could have a potentially catastrophic impact on its already fragile economy.

Poorly defined international laws on riparian rights leave little room for legal action.

Ankara's announcement last year that it would halt the Euphrates flow triggered speculation it was

using this vital resource to force Damascus and Baghdad to move against Kurdish rebels based in their border territories who have recently intensified their separatist guerrilla war against Ankara.

Foreign Ministry officials in Ankara deny there is any linkage. But Turkish anger, particularly at Syria, has risen in recent weeks after a raid by guerrillas of the Marxist Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK, in which 24 villagers were massacred, and the downing of a Turkish survey aircraft inside Turkish airspace by a Syrian MiG fighter in October.

The Ataturk project involves construction of 13 dams and 17 hydroelectric stations generating 8,000 megawatts of electricity, doubling the regional output, and providing irrigation for 74,000 square kilometres (28,600 square miles) of land.

The Turks have been provided Syria with 500 cubic metres of water a second from the Euphrates and increased that by 50 per cent in late December to compensate for the cut-off.

One of the problems is that the sources of the region's main rivers, the Euphrates, Tigris and Nile, are in non-Arab countries. For the Israelis, the rivers on which they rely originate in Arab countries.

Possibly the most potentially dangerous water dispute encompasses Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, over the waters of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon stemmed in part for its need to acquire water resources.

Algerian Berbers find their voice once more

TIZI, Ouzou, Algeria, (Reuters): In the rugged villages of the scenic Kabylia mountains, where few Arabs like to linger, Algeria's Berbers are once again talking politics.

For years the Amazigh or free men, as the Berbers call themselves, say they have been ignored or suppressed by an Arab-run central government which viewed with alarm their separate cultural identity.

But with socialist Algeria in the midst of an East European-style liberalisation, the Berbers have re-emerged as a major political force.

"The right to assert one's national identity is closely linked to individual liberties and human rights," said Ahmed Ait-Bachir, local leader of a new Berber political party, the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD).

The Berbers are the original inhabitants of North Africa. Their communities linked together in a confederacy of tribes maintained their independence resisting Roman, Vandal and Ottoman domination until the rise of Islam in the 7th century finally saw them under Arab control.

The Berbers gradually converted to Islam, but kept many of their separate cultural traditions alive. Women have tended to play a more dominant role than in Arab society and the Berber language Amazigh survives in slightly different forms across the region.

The social democratic-leaning RCD is one of the most important of about 30 parties legalised since President Chadli Benjedid began dismantling the one-party state after bloody youth riots in October 1988.

RCD president Said Saadi told Reuters that about 10 million Algerians, a third of the population, spoke Amazigh — a language not officially recognised by the state — and lived in a whole Berber environment.

"The institutions of the state must recognise this language and these facts, and bring themselves in line with reality," he said.

The RCD is pushing for a revision of the country's constitution, which stipulates that Algeria is an Arab state. The party also secures and wants Islam to be separated from politics and education.

Amazigh was spoken all over North Africa before Arab invasions beginning in the 7th century.

Fiercely-independent Berber communities remained for centuries a thorn in the side of central governments, and forms of their language are still spoken in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya as well as Syria.

In 1980 Algeria repressed demonstrations in Tizi Quzou calling for more local autonomy and cultural freedom.

The Berber movement was called "non-progressive" — a threat to the one-party socialist and Arab state created by the National Liberation Front (FLN) in 1962 after a bitter eight-year war of independence with France.

The RCD's ramshackle offices, in a dingy apartment block on the outskirts of this regional capital in the Berber heartland, are now buzzing with activity. Enthusiastic supporters — who less than 18 months ago risked imprisonment to meet secretly — openly debate tactics for local elections promised for May.

"Moving out from clandestinity, and adapting to the new situation, has been quite difficult for some activists. But our biggest problem is lack of means," Ait-Bachir said.

The party has a newspaper published in three languages — Arabic, French and Amazigh — and boasts 32,000 members nation-wide.

It is supported financially by levies on members and donations from the large number of Algerian emigrant workers in France, of whom 80 per cent have roots in Kabylia.

The RCD also claims strong support elsewhere, including the capital Algiers just over an hour's drive away. It says it is active in 42 of Algeria's 48 districts.

"Our programme is for all Algerians. Social justice is right for all," RCD national executive member Salah Cheballeh said.

But the party's secular stand has put it on a collision course with Muslim fundamentalists calling for an Islamic society.

The RCD, accusing the fundamentalists of a spate of violent incidents, says it wants to ally itself with other democratic parties to keep the Muslim radicals at bay.

Its most likely ally is another Kabylia-based party, the FFS (Front des Forces Socialistes) led by revolutionary hero Hocine Ait Ahmed who returned to Algeria a few weeks ago after 23 years in exile.

"The democratic parties have no choice but to work together," said Said Saadi, adding that any alliance must wait until the FFS had outlined their programme.

Bush begins second year sticking to his old guns

WASHINGTON (Reuters): George Bush begins his second year as president guided by an old folk wisdom — "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

With popularity ratings that match or exceed his recent predecessors, Bush marks the January 20 anniversary of his inauguration with little incentive to change his policies or tactics.

His public statements and talks with top White House officials make clear the emerging policy theme for 1990 is "unfinished agenda" and that the style will remain low-key.

"We're focusing on the unfinished agenda. We don't need a bunch of new issues," one senior official said of Bush's plans to stick with his proposals for a capital gains tax cut, clean air, child-care and anti-crime legislation.

"Will there be a big variance from 1989? No," another official said.

In foreign matters, Bush is likely to spend the first part of the year pressing for arms reduction deals in time for signing at a June summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Dogged by charges that he lacked vision and boldness, Bush ignored calls throughout 1989 that he lay out a grand vision for his presidency and opted to meet problems one-by-one as they crossed his desk.

A self-described "practical man," who has said he does not wish to lead crusades, Bush avoided grand gestures. His response to the crumbling of the Berlin Wall was so low-key that one commentator said he looked like "a pound of liver" and others feared Gorbachev's "new thinking" would dominate the international agenda for the next decade.

But as the 1990s began, democratic reform movements were sweeping Eastern Europe and Gorbachev was on the defensive — battling to contain ethnic rivalries and nation-

alist revivalism that threatened to split the Soviet Union.

"As you see the changes in Eastern Europe, see Mr Gorbachev struggling against what some would say are terribly difficult odds, things are coming our way. They're moving towards freedom, they're moving towards democracy," Bush said recently.

And he overcame doubts about his toughness, ending his first year in office by toppling Panamanian ruler Manuel Antonio Noriega in the largest US military operation since the Vienna war.

For 1990, Bush plans a balancing act in foreign affairs — seeking to solidify Eastern Europe's move toward democracy and conclude arms deals without yielding to public pressure for major cuts in America's military might.

He has vowed to seek cuts in long-range nuclear arms and conventional forces in time for the June summit.

But Bush says uncertainty about the future means the reduction in East-West tensions should not lead to a massive shift of funds from the Pentagon to domestic social programmes.

"We like what's happening in Central Europe. But just as it would have been impossible six months ago to predict these thunderous changes, it's impossible today to know what will unfold in the next six months, let alone the next six years," he said.

"This is not the time that we should naively cut the muscle out of our defence posture."

But White House aides acknowledge that Congress is unlikely to give Bush all he wants for the Pentagon. His own budget proposal, to be made public on January 29, will propose little change in military spending in the 1991 budget year beginning October 1.

Perhaps the toughest foreign policy challenge facing Bush will be defending his conciliatory stance toward China.

"China is difficult, we may get popped on that," one top aide conceded privately in assessing likely congressional efforts to impose new sanctions on China in retaliation for last June's bloody army assault on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

"But we'll fight our butts off to stave off sanctions," this aide added.

Bush, a former US envoy to China, has eased US sanctions he imposed on Beijing, saying it was wrong to isolate the world's most populous country.

He has received withering criticism for sending National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft on two covert missions to Beijing at a time when he had publicly banned high-level exchanges with China.

Despite a likely battle over China policy, White House officials are generally upbeat about chances for Bush's legislative proposals, which made little progress in 1989.

There is a growing feeling in Washington that Bush's passionate battle for a cut in capital gains taxes on investment profits will bear fruit this year.

No doubt mindful of this year's congressional elections, in which Republicans will try to reduce the Democratic majority in both houses, Bush has begun pound at Congress.

He declared it "pass time" for action on his legislative proposals and said the Democrats committed demagoguery in opposing his capital gains proposal.

Bush was Ronald Reagan's understudy for eight years, but his presidential style seems more reminiscent of others — a dash of Lyndon Johnson, a touch of Richard Nixon, even a glimmer of Jimmy Carter.

Like Johnson, the last president from Texas, Bush, who was born in Massachusetts 65 years ago but moved to Texas, is folksy and bursting with energy.

Letters to the editor

Abolish baggage allowance

Sir: Over the past decade Air India have stubbornly hiked the Gulf-India airfare about ten times, thanks to their persistence and the submissive response forced out of the helpless Gulf passengers, their balance-sheet is at last reported to be out of the red — may the "Maharajah" be prudent enough to keep it up.

To alleviate themselves of the financial strain caused by the recent strike by ground engineers, Indian Airlines bigwigs did not have to think twice before waging the easily accessible magic wand "fare hike".

Airport tax in India was recently increased by a shocking 200 per cent to Rs 300.

Facilities to passengers in Indian airports have steadily deteriorated, when flights get suddenly cancelled (which is a common occurrence these days attributed to technical faults, crew indisposition and a thousand silly reasons) desperate passengers are often shut like orphans, without food, accommodation, proper information and basic necessities. Such situations have, regrettably, come to stay as the order of the day.

Inside the terminal, a paper cup of two ounces hot water plus a pinch of Nescafe and sugar cost a fortune while the quality of snacks and food is worse than that of a low grade restaurant.

At the customs counters, experience proves that it is almost impossible to sail out smoothly without queuing.

Our parliamentarians and Gulf-Trotting elected representatives are becoming more and more famous for their lip services. Both ruling and opposition MPs and M.L.A.s are always unanimous and hand in hand when it comes to the question of periodical increase of their salaries, sitting allowance, travelling and other fringe benefits.

Retail price of all materials in the Gulf have registered steady increase with the expatriates' earnings plummeting alarmingly. Rupee value is less than half of what it was ten years ago, governments have come and gone.

Yet, the baggage allowance of the foreign exchange earning expatriate remains at a meagre Rs 1250/- (today a good Parker pen costs more than this), a real mockery as it is.

Why should the expatriate be cared for as long as he is denied of his fundamental right to exercise franchise as guaranteed under the constitution of India?

Better scrap the petty baggage allowance gracefully and save the expatriate from humiliation.

C.K. Satyarthi, Saffa.

Sensational news

SIR: The Embassy of Pakistan has taken note of the speculative and highly sensational news report in the Arab Times of today entitled "Hindo-Pak war likely". It would like to reiterate the statement made in the newspaper that "since the stalemate at the Afghan front the top brass of the Pakistan Army felt a bit demoralised and needed a moral booster, giving rise to apprehensions of another war." This is a biased statement carrying no credibility.

While reiterating that Kashmir is a disputed territory whose final settlement is outstanding as recognised by the Simla Agreement

Israel rebuffs US aid cut bid

LISBON, Jan 19, (AP): Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens said a proposal by US Senator Bob Dole to cut Washington's aid to Israel would be destabilising for the Middle East.

Speaking on Wednesday during a two-day official visit to Portugal, Arens said he understood US enthusiasm for aiding Eastern Europe.

But he added, "we would hope this would be done without cutting aid to Israel."

Arens told a Lisbon new conference Israel remained encircled by hostile Arab armies and said a cut in aid would upset the defence balance in the region.

Senate minority leader Dole Tuesday proposed cutting aid to Israel, Egypt and some other major recipients by five per

cent and switching the money to Eastern Europe and Panama.

Asked about reports his government plans to settle Jews from the Soviet Union in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Arens said the immigrants would be able to decide for themselves where in Israel they would settle.

"There will be no central planning," he said.

The US State Department said Tuesday that money given to Israel by the US government cannot be used to settle immigrants in the occupied territories, where 70,000 Israelis live among 1.7 million Palestinians.

Israel expects as many as 300,000 Soviet Jews will arrive in the coming years under

Bush delighted

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): President George Bush yesterday expressed his "delight" with Senate Republican leader Bob Dole's proposal to shake up US foreign aid allocations and give the White House, not Congress, more say over where the money goes.

"I want to see it put the power where it should be on this matter, and not masterminded foreign policy through 138 subcommittees allocating funds," Bush told reporters at the onset of an Oval Office meeting with the President of Turkey, Turgut Ozal.

the liberalised policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In Washington, Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin wound up talks with

United States officials yesterday, saying he had "reason to believe" US aid to his country would hold steady at \$3 billion a year through 1991.

But Rabin registered concern beyond next year, saying Israel's budget is strained by a rising influx of Soviet Jews and increased Soviet weapons shipments to Syria, Iraq and Libya.

He also indicated that Secretary of State James Baker has been unable to resolve a diplomatic impasse that is delaying Mideast negotiations on the future of the Israeli-held West Bank and Gaza.

"There are still gaps that remain between the Palestinians and Israelis," Rabin told Israeli reporters.

Iraq won't restore ties with Syria

Soviets to continue to help Syria to build defence

BAGHDAD, Jan 19, (AP): Iraq has said it will not restore ties with Syria despite Arab attempts to reconcile Baghdad and Damascus, which have been at odds for more than a decade.

Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's first deputy prime minister, told a news conference late Wednesday his government saw nothing new in Syria's policies.

He confirmed there were attempts by Arab governments to end the rift but said Baghdad is not willing at present to go along with any initiative to reconcile with Syria.

The feud between Iraq and Syria, ruled by rival wings of the Arab Baath Socialist Party, is the major remaining rift in the Arab world after last month's reconciliation between Egypt and Syria.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein both are known to be willing to mediate to end the rift but so far there has been no sign that Damascus or Baghdad will go along.

Syria supported Iraq against Iraq during the Gulf war, while Iraq supplied weapons to Gen. Michel Aoun in Lebanon during his six-month "war of liberation" against Syrian forces.

Ramadan, who spoke after two days of discussions by heads of government of the four-member Arab Co-operation Council, said the leaders discussed the latest developments in Eastern Europe.

Expressing annoyance at Arab and other newspaper commentaries drawing parallels between the Arab world and Eastern Europe, he said:

"Why is everybody talking as if we are part of the system that has collapsed in Eastern Europe... it is impossible to make such a link between what is happening there and what is going on here."

Ramadan said he and the prime ministers of Egypt, Jordan and North Yemen reviewed the upheaval and made some proposals to be presented to the ACC heads of state at a summit in Amman next month.

"We must make some precautions and be ready to face up to any negative possibility," he said, without elaborating.

Ramadan said the four leaders would study the Eastern European developments carefully and might call for an Arab summit to take a unified Arab stance with regard to them.

He denied that other Arab countries have asked to join the 1-year-old ACC but said socialist South Yemen would automatically become a member if the drive to reunite with conservative North Yemen is successful.

The Soviet ambassador to Syria, Alexander Zotov, yesterday was quoted as saying Syria and the Soviet Union have a "special relationship" and that Soviets will continue to help to build Syrian defence capabilities.

Zotov was quoted in the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Baath taht "within the framework of this obligation Soviet military experts work in Syria."

Zotov was directing his remarks at what he called "certain Western and Arab media (which) have spread rumours about the reduction of Soviet experts in Syria as well as a kind of complication between Syria and the Soviet Union."

He did not directly address a report from an informed Syrian source that a number of Soviet military advisors are being withdrawn under an agreement between Syria and Soviet military leaders.

200 held along with Hussein

TUNIS, Jan 19, (Reuters): The PLO said today that Israel had arrested more than 200 Palestinians in the occupied territories in the past 24 hours in a sweep which also included nationalist leaders Faisal Husseini and Radwan Abu Ayash.

"We have the names of 35 people in Nablus, 75 in villages around Nablus, 82 in the Ramallah area and 46 in Hebron," Palestine Liberation Organisation spokesman Bassem Abu Sharif said in Tunis.

"There are many in Gaza too but we don't have all the details yet," he added.

Abi Sharif said the campaign seemed to be directed against moderates who advocated peaceful co-existence with Israel.

Husseini, a leading Palestinian activist, has been mentioned as a likely negotiator in a proposed Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Husseini appeared briefly in occupied Jerusalem's magistrate court, where Judge Musia Arad ordered him held for four days for further investigation.

Police had asked that Hussein be held for 15 days, saying they wanted to question him "on suspicion he assisted in illegal organisation of the uprising," court documents showed.

Ms Arad said in a written decision that she ordered Hussein held because testimony from Palestinians indicated in a military court yesterday. They indicated Hussein provided money for the cell which allegedly planned unspecified violent actions.

She also said police provided her with "intelligence information," which was not made public at the hearing.

If convicted, Hussein could face a total of seven years in jail.

As he left the courtroom, Hussein shouted to reporters: "Nothing will stop the peace process."



Palestinian mourners pray at the funeral of Ali Muhammad Jamhur, whose body lies on the ground beneath olive branches and a Palestinian flag. Palestinian press reports said Jamhur was killed by Jews in a revenge attack for the stabbing of an Israeli woman soldier in an East Jerusalem market. (Reuters wirephoto)

Jew settlement rapped

Hussein criticises Shamir

AMMAN, Jan 19, (Agencies): King Hussein said in an interview published yesterday that a call by Israel's prime minister to settle Soviet Jews in occupied Arab lands is "a serious impending danger," threatening his kingdom.

"Who will these thousands of immigrants replace, and what will happen to those who will be replaced by these new arrivals?" Hussein told the Jordan Times newspaper.

He indicated the settlement could lead Israel to mass expulsions of the Palestinian natives of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip into Jordan, which Israeli extremists argue is already a Palestinian state.

"The daily Israeli practices against our people in the occupied territories, the expulsion of Palestinians and the Israeli intention to settle the expected immigrants all fit into the same Israeli scheme of 'Jordan is the solution,'" Hussein said.

Fewer than 100,000 Israelis have settled among some 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which Israel captured in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir suggested settling many of the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jewish refugees his country expects to receive in the occupied territories — lands Arabs hope to use for Palestinian state.

Shamir says his country will not give up the territories, despite Arab calls to make peace with Israel in exchange for return of the occupied lands.

Hussein called for Arab leaders to "prepare ourselves to confront the situation" which he said "threatens the depth of the Arab nation and the Palestinian people's national rights."

The king reiterated his support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which all 20 Arab countries see as the sole

negotiator for Palestinians.

"It is absolutely unacceptable and illogical for Israel to insist on the right to choose whom it will talk to from the Palestinian side," Hussein told the newspaper.

"The only address we know is the 'PLO' for 'Palestinian representation,' he said.

Hussein, who spent years trying to prod the PLO into concessions during the 1970s and 1980s, also said the organisation should not be forced to make further compromises at this stage.

"The PLO has given everything it could give... it cannot be asked to give any more," he said.

"It has not lost anything in the process, but it cannot give more."

The king also asserted his commitment to pushing forward with a democratic trend that has seen the first national elections in 22 years, sharp restrictions on martial law, greater press freedom and other steps.

Israel raids Lebanon twice

SIDON, Jan 19, (Reuters): Israeli jets today destroyed a radio station broadcasting support for the Palestinian uprising from South Lebanon — their second raid against commando targets in the region within hours.

Rescuers said four people were missing and believed dead and 13 others, including women and children, wounded when planes fired more than 20 rockets at a Palestinian training camp and the nearby "voice of Al-Quds (Jerusalem)" radio station.

The four planes destroyed underground offices of the station and its new antennae two days before it was due to extend its broadcasts to cover all Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Syria.

The radio, mouthpiece of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, is dedicated to supporting the uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was partially destroyed in a similar Israeli attack in 1988.

"These successive air raids, through which the enemy sought to silence the voice of freedom, will not stop us from continuing to support our people in the courageous intifada (uprising)," Awar, Madi, a senior Fatah officer, told reporters.

"The first Israeli air raid, in dawn, targeted positions of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah in the villages of Louzaitch and Ain Bouswar, 40 km (25 miles) south of Beirut. Security sources said one fighter was killed and four wounded."

Nine hours later and only 15 km (11 miles) to the west, the planes began the first of ten strafing runs over the camp and radio station in an attack which lasted 75 minutes.

The jets were met by a hail of anti-aircraft and rocket fire from PLO commandos but the Israeli army said all its planes returned safely to base.

"Israeli air force planes this afternoon attacked a broadcasting station east of Sidon. All planes returned safely to base and the target was damaged," it said in a statement.

Earlier today the PLO accused Israel of staging a crackdown in the occupied territories, saying more than 200 people had been detained in the past 24 hours. Among those arrested were leading activist Faisal Husseini.

Shops, schools, and banks in Sidon shut hurriedly and residents rushed for cover as the jets soared over the city.

Friday's air raids were Israel's first into Lebanon since it staged 15 raids on Lebanese and Palestinian bases last year, killing 40 people.

Israeli radio said the first raid was against bases used by Hezbollah to stage attacks on Israel's northern border, including recent incidents in which Katyusha rockets were fired.

Soviet advisers cut denied

The Soviet Union joined Syria on Wednesday in denying reports that Moscow had pulled out most of its military advisers from Syria.

Alexander Zotov, Soviet Ambassador to Syria, and an official at the Bureau of the Soviet military advisers in Syria, said in separate statements that the number of Soviet military advisers and experts had not changed. (Reuters)

Junta conditions holding up aid

Foreign relief workers and diplomats in Sudan are frustrated by the country's ruling Junta was delaying a relief programme with near-impossible conditions.

They said several areas in the vast and underdeveloped region, where a civil war has raged since 1983, were desperately short of food. (Reuters)

Weekly publishes again

An English-language Jerusalem Star weekly newspaper closed after a government takeover in 1988 re-emerged Thursday under private ownership in Amman, Jordan. (AP)

Peres to visit Prague

Israeli Finance Minister Shimon Peres will make a three-day visit to Czechoslovakia arriving Sunday, sources at the Finance Ministry said Wednesday. (AP)

Hope to head home

Three American technicians working for Lockheed Aircraft Corp. hope to leave Chad early Sunday after being detained for two weeks, a negotiator for the company said Thursday.

Len R. Webb, Lockheed's regional manager for Africa and the Middle East, said it was possible the trio will leave Ndjamena for Paris at 12:30 am local time Sunday (23:30 GMT Saturday) on an Air Afrique flight. (AP)

Tehran, Azerbaijan air link

Iran is to set up an air link between Tehran and the troubled southern Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Iranian news agency Irna, received in Nicosia on Thursday, quoted an unnamed government official as saying Iran was "fully prepared to receive tourists from neighbouring countries, particularly from southern Soviet republics." (Reuters)

WHO rejects: The World Health Organisation

(WHO) on Thursday rejected a move to postpone its annual assembly aimed at sidestepping an attempt by the PLO to become a full member state. (Reuters)

Chevenement to visit

French Minister of Defence, Jean-Pierre Chevenement will commence his official visit to Iraq January 27-30 in reply to an invitation from his Iraqi counterpart Lieutenant General Abduljabbar Shemshel, official sources said in Kuwait today. (KUNA)

Cyprus to pray for rain

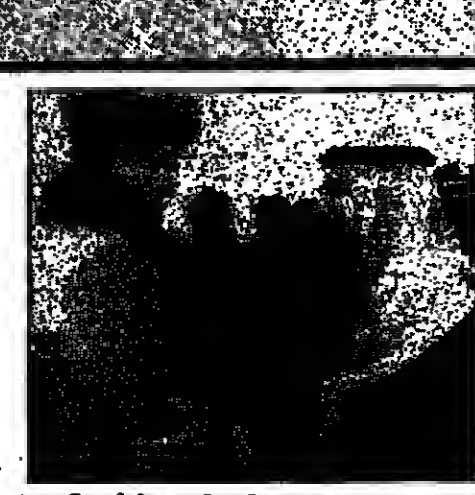
Greek-Orthodox priests are to pray for rain in what has so far been the driest January in Cyprus for 20 years.

And the island's skiers are hoping for some divine help on the slopes of the Troodos Mountains. The Cyprus ski club is planning a major ski competition for the end of the month but so far there isn't any snow. (Reuters)

Rebel offensive repulsed

Government troops have repulsed a rebel offensive on a major garrison town and "destroyed most of the enemy force" in five days of fighting, it was reported.

The Ethiopian media said the Tigre People's Liberation Front fighters mounted a two-pronged attack on Desse, 240 kilometres (148 miles) north-east of Addis Ababa Jan 13 but were retreating Wednesday. (AP)



Saddam in Amman

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ended a brief visit to Jordan on Thursday after talks with King Hussein.

"We discussed with our brother Saddam the joint moves and the interest of the Arab nation in these critical circumstances," the King told Jordan's official Petra news agency after bidding Saddam farewell.

An Iranian official said exchanges of wounded or disabled prisoners of war with Iraq would not continue after Baghdad sent home 20 POWs on Thursday, one day after Iran repatriated 50 Iraqi captives. Picture shows King Hussein bids farewell to Saddam.

Algerians fear violence

Algerians fear their fragile new democracy is threatened by a wave of violence and strikes which the government blames on enemies of reform. (Reuters)

Anti-Aoun demonstration

BEIRUT, Jan 19, (Agencies): Lebanon's Press Association today called a demonstration to protest maverick Christian Gen. Michel Aoun's attempts to "partition the press and strip Lebanon of its freedom."

The call followed overnight skirmishes with machineguns between Aoun's soldiers and Muslim militiamen across Beirut's dividing Green Line. Police said no casualties were reported.

Atmosphere ripe for political settlement

Afghan rebels plan polls

ISLAMABAD, Jan 19, (AP): A top US official said yesterday that improving US-Soviet relations have created an opening to negotiate an end to Afghanistan's 11-year-old civil war.

US Undersecretary of State Robert Kimmitt hinted that the two superpowers have embraced a more conciliatory approach to Afghan peace talks aimed at ending the fighting between rebels and the communist government in Kabul.

While Washington continues to insist that Afghan President Najib be removed, his departure is no longer seen as a prerequisite to opening peace talks, Kimmitt said.

But he acknowledged that the rebels, known as mujahadeen, remain opposed to negotiating with Najib.

Moscow, on the other hand, has resurrected a year-old offer to support the installation of a "transitional" government made up of rebel representatives and the communists now in power in

Kabul, Kimmitt said. He added that Washington believes such an arrangement would lead eventually to Najib's removal.

A senior US official, who refused to be identified, said the rejection of single party communist rule by several East bloc countries coupled with the violent unrest in the Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan has increased pressure on the Soviet Union to stabilise its relations with the United States.

The US-backed rebels said on Wednesday it would hold elections in Afghanistan for assemblies that in turn would select a government to replace Kabul's Soviet-backed communist administration.

Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf, prime minister of the resistance-established Afghan government-in-exile in Pakistan, said the polls would be held over three months starting in February in all of Afghanistan's more than 200 districts.

Iran group threatens UK citizens

TEHRAN, Jan 19, (Reuters): A radical Iranian student group warned Britain its citizens in Islamic countries and elsewhere would be in danger if it did not free jailed Iranian students.

The militant former interior minister, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, joined the condemnation of Britain, saying its treatment of Iranian students was savage.

It was not clear if Mohtashemi, elected to parliament last month, backed the students' threat against British people. But he reaffirmed that an Iranian death order against British author Salman Rushdie was still valid.

Britain deported two Iranian students last month. A third, 33-year-old Mehrdad Kokabi, was arrested and charged with an arson attack on a London bookshop selling copies of Rushdie's controversial novel 'The Satanic Verses.'

The group, called the Bureau for Consolidation of Unity of Islamic Societies of Universities, is an umbrella organisation for hardline student groups.

Egypt holding 2,411 detainees, says minister

CAIRO, Jan 19, (Reuters): Egypt's new interior minister said in remarks published today that police were holding 2,411 people under emergency laws but promised a policy review to reduce the number.

Mohammed Abdel-Halim Moussa, sworn in last Friday to succeed unpopular Zaki Badr, told the semi-official newspaper Al Ahram the figure included only 812 political detainees — a term which applies to Muslim militants and leftist activists.

He said 22 people were freed since he took office after growing opposition demands for the sacking of Badr. More would be released after a preview on a case-by-case basis, he said.

Moussa, a former governor of the central

province of Assiut, defended emergency laws in force for the past eight years but said he would use their extensive powers sparingly.

"I hereby declare that I will only use detention in accordance with guarantees of the laws," he said. "It will only be used against violent crimes, terrorism drugs and economic subversion."

He said he would be the first to call for the abolition of the law "when we feel that the need for the emergency law... no longer exists."

His predecessor's wide use of special powers and crude language created many enemies from all walks of life and finally led to his fall after four years in office.

Shamir willing to meet Syrian, Iraqi leaders, but not Arafat

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Jan 19, (UPI): Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir expressed a willingness to meet the leaders of Syria and Iraq — Arab states that present the most serious military threat to Israel — but not with PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

In a meeting yesterday with Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania, Shamir said such talks could affect the atmosphere of all the Middle East.

"I am ready to meet and discuss with any one of the Arab representatives, with the President of Syria, Hafez Al Assad, and

the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, but not with Yasser Arafat," he said.

Shamir's comments came as Syria, which resumed diplomatic ties with Egypt last month after a decade of hostility, has begun to moderate its stance toward the peace process. An Egyptian Foreign Ministry source said Syria had fell out of the Arab mainstream and feared being isolated.

"Syria cannot stand in the way of current Middle East peace efforts because it needs to avoid becoming isolated at a time when the Arab world is moving closer together," the source said. "Syria alone

cannot stand in the way of the changes that are sweeping the world. They themselves have admitted this."

Also, Arafat has launched an effort to improve ties with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, a long-time supporter of radical Palestinian groups opposed to Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Arafat, in remarks published in the Cairo weekly magazine Al-Mussawwar, said Damascus should release Palestinian prisoners, stop interfering in the PLO's internal affairs and acknowledge past PLO decisions, such as its renunciation of terrorism and its recognition of Israel's

right to exist.

Assad led the Arab boycott of Egypt after Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. But Assad restored ties with Egypt under President Hosni Mubarak.

Despite increasing contacts with Israel, and PLO members, Shamir refuses to have contact with the group, which he considers dedicated to destroying Israel. The right-wing prime minister's refusal to negotiate with anyone directly associated with the PLO is considered one of the major obstacles in advancing the Middle East peace process.

Meet a neighbour

Career number two strikes lucky

By Soumy Abraham
Arab Times staff

YOU might describe Keaton Woods as a world citizen. Born in the United States, he spent his formative years in Argentina, where his father took up an assignment.

Later, he returned to the States to attend university before launching himself into his career. His work, over the last 15 years, has taken him to Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Orient and the Caribbean.

Along the way, Woods married a Singaporean girl, Jinn, and the two now have a 3-year-old daughter, Melissa, and an 11-month-old son, Kevin. He was introduced to Jinn at a party during his stint in Singapore. "We met in May, 1983, and got married in August next year. A rather brief courtship, don't you think?"

Early this month, Woods arrived in Kuwait for the first time to take over as General Manager of Le Meridien, one of the country's best-known hotels. A prestigious assignment, by any standards, and a position in which Woods can be expected to play an active role in Kuwait's social life.

His latest job came to Woods by chance. He was actually preparing to move to Beijing, where his previous employers were planning to start a hotel. But the events of last June in China forced the company to shelve its plans and Woods found himself looking for another position. Beijing's loss was Kuwait's gain, you might say.

But how did Woods come to take up hotel management as a profession, considering that he took a degree in electrical engineering from Cornell University? In fact, his first job was as a production engineer at an electronics company.

"I didn't find the work satisfactory. It was always from the drafting table and the desk to numbers and lines, instead of dealing with people. I realised that this was not what I wanted to do," he said.

"And I am naturally gregarious and enjoy people," he adds by way of explanation. So Woods went back to college, this time to the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, from where he graduated with distinction. From there to the hospitality industry was just one step short.

Woods first joined the Intercontinental chain, handling a series of assignments, mainly in the nature of trouble-shooting, all over the globe. During this period, he had brief stints in Riyadh and Amman, so he is not entirely new to the Arab World.

"It's been a very happy chance," he said, talking about his decision to switch careers. "It's been all and more than I expected."

According to him working with people in the hospitality industry is a real challenge as he tries to cope with the needs of all kinds of guests. There could be needs that the guests sometimes don't even realise they have.

And then there is the excitement of meeting new people all the time, men and women who are widely travelled and international in outlook. These are also successful and stimulating people, he said. They are ultimately the inspiration for a hotel to improve itself in all respects.

Woods says that listening forms and important part of his job, listening to guests at the hotel and being receptive to ideas from his team. A hotel has to be very responsive to guests if it wants to stay in the business.



Keaton Woods: From engineer to hotel manager.

For instance, his hotel now has what is called a "mark-up room" — a room where some of the improvements planned in the rooms have been implemented. All guests staying in this room are requested to fill up a form, giving their reactions to various facilities. "We try and look at exactly what the guests want," he said.

What is a typical day in his life like? "Well, today I came in around 8:30 am and first went through the log book, detailing all that happened during the night," he said.

At nine, all the department heads gather for a briefing in his room, a meeting where minor problems are sorted out. Later, Woods will go around all the departments, talking to the staff and hearing their

suggestions or problems. A lot of minor problems are sorted out along the way.

Woods will also go to the kitchen, where he will inspect all the food that is being received, to make sure everything is fresh and up to par. He will also spend some time in the lobby, looking at various facilities and meeting some guests. "You can't run a hotel from behind your desk," he pointed out.

One of Woods' many tasks is entertaining important business contacts of the hotel. On the day we met him, he was due to have lunch with a visiting ambassador, who plans to host an important meeting in the hotel next month.

Later, he will attend to some routine tasks like signing cheques, letters and other papers. He will also go through the afternoon reports from department heads and then attend a weekly meeting with them. This meeting is chaired in turn by the different managers so as to help them develop leadership qualities, an essential prerequisite if they are to take up positions like Resident Manager or General Manager in the future.

His day will finally end sometime around 7 or 8 in the evening, when he goes home. Of course, home is in the hotel itself, so he is never really away from work.

Woods said that staying in the hotel itself has its advantages, in as much as he uses the very same facilities that are available to guests also. So, if something is not functioning properly, like the showers, for instance, he knows about it immediately and can take remedial steps.

What is it like working in different parts of the world? "Well, the cultures are different and you learn to adapt to them," he said. For instance, what would be very normal in some countries is forbidden in others.

For Woods, living in Kuwait has been a new and enjoyable experience. His daughter has begun attending a creative day-care centre and is enjoying it. His wife has also made many new friends, including Americans and Asians. Woods himself has picked up a smattering of Arabic from his earlier stint in the region and is now working on improving it so that he acquires a "decent vocabulary."

Apart from English Woods speaks Spanish fluently (his mother taught the language at university) and can "get by" in French.

And what does he enjoy doing in his leisure? "I enjoy watching a good movie on the video." What kind? "Action films and comedies, they cheer me up," he said. Who are his favourite stars? "I relate more to the directors, a good director will choose the right actors for a movie," he explains.

He also has a "small stereo system" and likes to listen to music. He finds classical music very relaxing and absorbing.

Woods also likes food. He likes Arabian food, sub-continental curries and spicy Chinese dishes. "My wife makes the best beef curry in the world and it is hard to choose between her cooking and the food in the hotel," he smiles.

Finally, what does he think makes a good hotel? In this, he quotes Hilton, who listed the three most important reasons as "location, location and location." In that respect, he feels that his hotel in Kuwait enjoys a major advantage. "Of course, your product and services must also come up to the people's expectations."

So, at 42, Woods is happy in his chosen career, doing just what he enjoys most.

TELEVISION PROGRAMME

KTV 1

THE MORNING PERIOD

9.30 The Opening and Holy Quran

9.40 Sabah Al Kher news

9.50 Cartoon serial

10.15 Magazine D'Actualite (repetition)

10.30 Baraat Messaad Al Kbnul: Arabic serial, starring Imad Rashad, Fayza Kamal, Ahmad Rabe and Sawzan Bader

11.30 Wadan Zaman Al Sami: Weekly Arabic serial (part 3)

12.30 News summary

12.35 Sabah Al Kher News

12.40 Holy Quran and closedown

THE EVENING PERIOD

4.00 The Opening and Holy Quran

4.15 The World Today via Satellite (repetition)

4.45 Beren: Cartoon serial

5.15 The Young Artist: Local children's programme, prepared and presented by Mohammed Al Sheikh

5.45 Night chemists, airlines and official advertisements

6.00 Al Fareso Al Asheq: Historical serial (part 3)

7.00 Varieties

7.15 Noor Al Islam: Religious programme, prepared and presented by Ahmad Abdul Qader

7.45 Cultural Programme

8.00 Security and citizens: Local programme

8.30 Good Evening and local news

9.00 News in Arabic

9.45 Ghdan Tushraq Al Shams: Arabic serial (part 16)

10.45 Thei Al Nashama: Beduin weekly serial (part 3), starring Ghanem Al Saleh, Roubi Al Safadi and Ali Al Mufeedi

11.45 News summary

11.50 The World Today via Satellite

KTV 2

THE MORNING PERIOD

12.15 Holy Quran and closedown

6.00 Opening Announcement and Holy Quran

6.10 Adventures of Raggedy and Andy: A cartoon series for children

6.30 Orphans of The Wild "Nocturnal": "Survival of the fittest" is the law that prevails in the wild life ... owls, hedgehogs, snakes and crocodiles

7.00 The Ultimate Machine: Messages exchanged between mind and senses ... intuition and immediate insight: A relation between things and their names

7.30 The Hogan Family: "A Room With No View." Michael and his sons have a weekend picnic. He gets sick and everything goes wrong

8.00 News in English

8.30 Quantum leap: "How the Tess was won." Sam pretends by the help of "Al" that he is a veterinarian ... But Tess has one condition to accept him as her fiancé

9.30 The Great Iron Wall: "The Middle Ages with Missiles." The continuous attempts made by China to build a modern army equipped with sophisticated arms ... The present and future goals of China

10.30 Feature film: "Dead Man Out." A man is sentenced to death for killing a young girl ... He is badly treated and acts badly towards other prisoners. A psychiatrist attempts to study his case and help him

12.00 News in Brief

12.15 Magazine D'Actualite

ARTS

Seminar

THE seminar at the DAA, on Arabic and European Art in The Light of Zodiacal Symbolism has been postponed. It will be given during the period Feb 11 - March 11, 1990. Morning sessions on Sunday and Tuesday 11.00 - 12.30 am and evening sessions on Sunday and Tuesday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Registration may be made by phoning the DAA at Athar Al Islamiyyah, Tel: 2430826, 2453259.

Iraqi ceramics

AN exhibition of Iraqi ceramics is currently being held at the Hunting and Equestrian Club. The exhibition will be opened everyday until January 26 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Tribal Rugs & Oriental Prints

THE Sultan Gallery extended their Tribal Rugs and Oriental Prints exhibition until Jan 31. The gallery is open from 9:30 am to 12:30 noon and 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. For more information contact: 2421951.

SOCIAL

Kuwait Singers

THE Kuwait Singers will begin rehearsals for its May concert on Monday, January 22, at 7:30 pm at the Gulf English School, Salwa. New members are most welcome. For more information contact 4884134 or 3900922.

Ballet

STEPS Ballet School commences its new term. Jan 1990 registration is now open Saturday in the Kuwait English School, Salwa from 3-7 pm. Call 5386481 between 9-12 noon for more information. (For girls only 4-15 years).

Konkani drama

THE New Goans Overseas Association is pleased to announce Menino De Bandar's "Soussarant Astana Diar" a Konkani play which will be held in the Indian Arts Circle (Funaites) on 16th February 1990. The cast all from Goa includes M. Boyer, Felcy, Josephine, Betty Alvares, Tita, Junior Rod, Carlos, Rosario Dias, C. D'Silva, John de Parra and Menino de Bandar. Tickets now available at Canary Video (Sharq) and Video Clock (near G.P.O.). Rush for tickets, no show only.

Kuwait Little Theatre

Kuwait Little Theatre, Ahmadi, are holding auditions for a comedy to be staged in the theatre in early March and directed by Dave Dorrington. The auditions will be held in the Theatre on 21 and 22 January at 8 pm. All those interested in auditioning are welcome. Those interested in helping backstage are also welcome to attend.

II Annual one act Play Competition

INDIAN Arts Circle

announces the II Annual One Act Competition to be held during Eid holidays in April, 1990. The competition is open to Plays in any Indian language including English. Awards shall include Best Play (1st, 2nd & 3rd), Best Director, Best Actor & Actress, Best Child Actor, Best Stage Setting and Best Acting Performance from each team. Registration form with rules & regulations are available from Indian Arts Circle office at Funaites. Last date of submitting registration form with required details is 28th February, 1990. Please contact IAC office (Tel. 3904817) for further details. All Indian associations engaged in theatrical activities are requested to join.

Hotel Ramada Al Salam

A GRAND Indian Food Festival will be held from Jan 21-26 to coincide with the Republic Day of India. Arun Budhiraja, the Ambassador of India will grace the occasion, which will be supported by various Indian companies with stalls displaying Indian products. Enchanting performances by Indian classical dancers and musicians will be the highlights. A sumptuous Indian cuisine seeks to complete a memorable event.

Carnival Fiesta '90

YMCA/Incredible S.C. are proud to announce their Carnival Fiesta '90 at Messilah Beach Hotel (Habiba) on 22nd Feb 90.

Non stop dancing from 8.30 pm onwards to the beat of latest sensation "Hurricane Alley" and "Neighbour."

Highlights: Best Carnival Couple (Fancy) and many many surprises. For details contact the Organisers. Hurry

Saz aur Anwar

SAZ aur Anwar which is one of the leading Indian musical groups with complete orchestra presents their fourth musical programme entitled "Bhule Biare Geet" covering hit songs of yesteryears at the Indian Arts Circle, Funaites on Friday, Feb 2, 1990 at 6 pm. There will also be lucky draw prizes. For Passes call 3983456/3610224/5638026 after 4 pm.

Maharashtra Mandal

MAHARASHTRA Mandal, Kuwait celebrates their second "Makar Sankrat Ustav" on Sunday Jan 21, 1990 at the Indian Embassy Auditorium from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. All members are requested to attend. Ladies International League LIL newcomers coffee morning will be held on Monday 29 January from 10 am to 12 noon at the Sheraton Hotel. Newcomers to Kuwait and LIL are most welcome.

Like a Hurricane!!

SEVENTH Sky's upcoming Rock concert at Al Andalus cinema on 15th & 16th February, 1990. We are looking for voluntary helpers and also an additional male & female vocalist. Ring 3748476 or 2543219.

Raga Sharqi

INTENSIVE courses (January and February) in Raga Sharqi, the classical dance form of the Middle East. For details call 4836021.

The Carnival Nite

"THE Carnival Nite" Entertainers" proudly announces for the first time in Kuwait "The Carnival Nite" which is scheduled to be held at the Ramada Al Salam Hotel's Le Mirage main ballroom on 22nd February 1990. Be sure to be there with all your glit and glamorous costumes to witness this traditional event. Top Ranks and Perfect Strangers will rhythm out their best musical performance for this occasion.

Caledonian Society

The Annual Burns Night Supper will be held at Messilah Beach Hotel on Thursday, February 1st. For further information call 5335082, 5332235 or 3727691 ext. 253.

Kalkpak's Drama Competition

KERALA Arts and Literature Promotion Association of Kuwait (Kalkpak) is conducting a Malayalam One Act Play Competition at Indian Arts Circle on 9th February 1990.

SPORTS

Bhutto Cup

KUWAIT Cricket League is organising a cricket match between the teams of Indian and Pakistani veterans living in Kuwait, at K.C.L. ground on 2nd February 1990. The match will start at 9 am.

Kuwait Cricket takes this opportunity and announce that a lucky draw will be held with at least fifty prizes which includes colour TV, VCR, sewing machine, watches, cameras and many more household items are waiting for the winners. All are cordially invited. For further information please call, tel. 5332052 S. Rizvi.

Now at the MBH Sports Centre

Life saving course, with Royal Life Saving Society Coach, Grade 1 Examiner will be commencing shortly. Ergocycle Fitness Computer tests and courses now available at Messilah. Jazzercise/Aerobics/Staying power/Yoga and Ballet exercise classes also available.

Hobby centre

A NEW 8 week course in Jewellery and Design making — For more details call: Telephone: 5618847 or 5317354.

Daniella Dart Tournament 1990

The Dart Tournament for Dances will take place at the Gazelle Club on Friday, Jan 26, starting at 2pm (expected to finish at 8 pm). It is a family event featuring separate junior tournament, so don't leave the children at home. For further details and registration, please call Henrik Licht — 3727688 ext 246; or Bjorne Rasmussen — 3720137 before Saturday, Jan 20.

Tivim Centre

"TIVIM Centre is pleased to announce their 3rd Annual 9-a-side Inter Village Football Tournament which will be held on the Sour grounds, Kuwait City, beginning March 27/28th 1990. For further information please contact organisers — 2441860 Casmiro.

At the Holiday Inn Health Club and Recreation Centre

SWIMMING lessons available all year round with qualified swimming instructors. Open to non-members. Mnn-Tues-Wed 3:30 to 5:30. Beginners-improvers-adults mixed keep fit classes, Wed 5-6 Thurs 6-7, Fri 12-1:00 and 1-2:00, Sat 5-6:00. Ladies keep fit, Mnn 5-6, Tues 5-6, Fri 5-6 and Sun 5:30-6:30. Martial arts w/black belt instructor Mnn-Wed 6, Taekwondo Sat-Mnn, 7-8 Thurs 5-6. Bowling alley available for private company and community tournaments. Five squash courts. Squash handicap every Sunday start 6 pm - all standards, open to non-members. Squash coaching available from professional coach everyday, from 1 pm. Massage for men and women; gym facilities for men and women; tennis courts - coaching available. Plus lots more. Phone for further details — Recreation Manager, 4742000 ext 6788 Julie Dent nr 6700 recreation.

HOTELS

Ramada Al Salam

GRAND Indian Food Festival from January 21-26. Display stalls open to Indian companies and individuals. Contact Clifton nr Siddiq on 4835344.

Holiday Inn

AL AHMADI COFFEE SHOP: An ideal venue for that business lunch or a relaxing dinner at the end of the day. Choose from our lavish international buffet (lunch-KD5.500 and dinner-KD5.750) and then sit back n enjoy the Holiday Inn's excellent service. Why not treat yourself to our value for money. Breakfast buffet (KD2.500) you can always work off those excess calories at the Holiday Inn fitness centre.

AL DANA RESTAURANT

Spend your Thursday night Arabic style. Savour our exotic oriental and international food. Relax to the musical... entertainment, provided by our resident Arabic band. Come and enjoy ... You deserve it. (KD6,000). AL ANDALUS SUPPER CLUB: Friday family lunch —

A great time for the whole family. Prizes and surprises for the children with Disney characters and our amazing magician. A sumptuous oriental and international buffet complemented by the sounds of our resident band, makes this a day to look forward. See you all ... Adults KD5.000 and children KD2.500.

CINEMA TODAY

Al Andalus

Arabic film

Salmiyah

Hall booked

Al Hanra

Arabic film

Drive-in

Arabic film

Al Firdos

Nadine

Fahkeel

Adikurpu

Al Jahra

License to kill

Granada

Top line

Safabikhat

Arabic film

Jeeb

Adikurpu

Ahmadi Drive-In

Space mutiny

PRAYERS

Fajr

Zohr

Asr

Maghreb

Isha

5.20 pm

11.59

2.56 pm

5.15

6.36

Waleed Howrani plays for AUB Graduates at the Regency

IN the presence of the Acting President of the American University of Beirut, Ibrahim Salhi, the AUB graduates will host the international pianist of Lebanese origin, Waleed Howrani for a piano recital at the Kuwait Regency Palace January 22, 1990.

This event is part of the AUB graduates continuous effort to foster relations among each other and raise funds for the AUB which like other Lebanese institutions suffered a great deal under the civil war.



Nadar Sangam holds reception

NADAR SANGAM Kuwait hosted a reception to the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, A.K. Budhiraja, followed by Pongal Vizha at the Indian Embassy Hall last week.

The programme started with a patriotic song followed by Varghese Ghee's speech about the Pongal Vizha. Children performed varieties of

entertainment with dances and music. A vote of thanks was given by Thanga Sudaran and the Indian national anthem marked the end of the evening.

Pictures show: the Ambassador, A.K. Budhiraja (right) and Simpson's musical group (left)

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Profit margins may be squeezed due to increased competition

Asia's airlines order jets for travel boom

HONG KONG, Jan 19, (Reuters): Asia's major airlines have ordered billions of dollars worth of jetliners in recent months as they prepare for soaring growth in Asia-Pacific travel in the 1990s.

Industry analysts say booming economies and their by-product, a burgeoning middle class with an urge to travel, justify the confidence of the region's carriers illustrated by an order by Singapore Airlines (SIA) for 50 American planes announced on Tuesday.

Another big spender is Australia's state-owned Qantas Airways, which will spend \$4.7 billion to nearly double its fleet over the next four years.

Some analysts warn that profit margins may be squeezed due to increased competition, both from new airlines within the region and the US aviation giants, and by rising costs of labour, airport facilities and borrowings.

"Demand will continue to be very strong throughout the 1990s but at the same time costs are going to rise," said Greg Miller, analyst with Hong Kong's Sun Hung Kai Securities.

The market's consensus is that the number of international airline passengers travelling within the region will grow eight to 10 per cent a year over the next decade, about twice the rate expected in Europe and North America, he said.

The surge in Japanese tourists travelling within the region will remain a key factor, said John Mulcahy, research director with the Peregrine brokerage in Hong Kong.

Now he sees the "travel bug" getting a grip among the well-heeled in Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia.

"The initial wave of Taiwan travellers has been into Hong Kong and China... but as their disposable income rises they are going to spread

their wings a bit further," he said. "Asia is increasingly becoming its own market. As a result business travellers are moving around the region with a great deal more frequency," Mulcahy added.

Analysts say the potential for new markets as political relationships change could also provide a boost. The rising frequency of flights to Vietnam is cited as an example.

Best placed to benefit from the region's growth are likely to be Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways, Thai Airways and SIA, said John King of the aviation consultancy Avmark in Australia.

"In terms of outlook, aggression and fleet expansion these three have the best chance of success," he said.

The Japanese Airlines, Japan Airline (JAL) and All Nippon Airways (ANA), are also picked by analysts as two of the strongest in the region, due to rising

demand and their relatively high fares.

SIA is seen benefiting from its recently formed alliances with Swissair and Delta Air Lines of the United States.

There is a trend towards this kind of global link-up. When New Zealand's flag carrier Air New Zealand was privatised last year Qantas took a 20 per cent stake and JAL and American Airlines bought 7.5 per cent each.

However, analysts do not expect mergers between flag carriers. This is due to the importance of the national airline to a country's image, and the current structure of airline landing agreements, which are on a bilateral basis.

But while the market has been a high-flyer overall, it is not without problems. In the past year a number of regional airlines have suffered reverses due to difficulties ranging from political unrest to strikes and accidents.

China's CAAC announced this week

it would buy 19 jets in 1990, but this was 10 fewer than in 1989. Analysts said this reflected a sharp fall in tourism to China after Beijing's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters last June.

In Australia, Qantas has been hit by a domestic pilots' dispute, which has hobbled the tourism industry.

And Korean Air Lines, already trying to recover from two serious accidents in 1989, now has to face competition from a new carrier. On January 10, Asiana, a South Korean airline previously serving only domestic routes, launched its first international service with a flight from Seoul to Tokyo.

Taiwan's flag carrier China Airlines is also facing future competition from a new venture, the Evergreen Airways Corporation, which expects to start international service in 1991.

These new Asian entrants are more

of a threat to existing regional carriers than the US airlines are. The Americans have to negotiate improved bilateral agreements to get a bigger presence, said Seow Suan, research manager at South China Brokerage Research.

Suan is optimistic about prospects in the first half of the 1990s, provided oil prices do not rise sharply. But in the latter half she is concerned there will be over-capacity.

"There will be a cycle like in any other sector, like hotels or property or shipping, there will be overbuild and there will be a glut," she forecast.

Some other analysts say the regional airlines will gradually lose their edge.

"After 10 years or so the Asian airlines are likely to have net margins and costs more in line with the European and American carriers," said Miller of Sun Hung Kai.

Bid to strengthen national savings

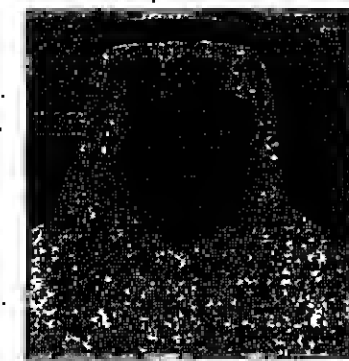
Plans to modify companies law

LONDON, Jan 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's Commerce and Industry Minister Faisal Abdel Razak Al Khaled has said certain measures will soon be introduced in Kuwait to reinvigorate the country's stagnant economy during the 1990s.

In an interview with the London-based Al Shark Al Awsat newspaper, published here today, Al Khaled said short-term and long-term measures to reactivate the economy were derived from recommendations hammered out by a joint economic committee, comprising representatives from both the public and private sectors.

Al Khaled said his ministry was currently reviewing industry regulations in the country, indicating that a new industry law will be issued soon to cope with the objectives of the upcoming stage.

The minister said the boom in Kuwaiti economy in early 1980s had revived dealing in the official



Al Khaled

stock exchange coupled with dealing in an unofficial stock exchange over the then Rasman Souk-Al Mankh which attracted businessmen from among citizens of the Gulf Co-operation Council.

He added irresponsible behaviour of some dealers at the time had led to the 1982 crash in the stock exchange.

Al Khaled said his ministry was considering some amend-

ments on the commercial companies law with a view to encourage establishment of share-holding companies in a bid to gather national savings for use in financing investment activities in various sectors.

The Kuwaiti minister said the stock exchange committee was exerting efforts to diversify investment tools through encouraging trading in bonds and introduction of the investment funds system for trading by both the Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis.

He said the committee was planning to broaden the base of participation at the stock exchange by allowing financial institutions to take part besides the individuals in the next decade.

Asked on the impact of the merger of some companies and the clearance of their budgets from bad debts on the future of dealing during the 1990s, Al Khaled said such a move would

create a new well-equipped economic unit capable of accomplishing the objectives of its very establishment.

Al Khaled outlined that registration of Kuwaiti, Arab or foreign companies in Kuwait bourse was subject to certain measures stipulated in the decision by the committee on the issue, saying other companies which did not meet the conditions for registration in the official market could register in the parallel market until their financial situations were improved.

Replying to a question on the readiness of the Gulf countries to assume the financial role of Hong Kong after its return to China, Al Khaled said all required factors for this role were available in the Gulf region, citing existence of modern ports, communications, capable financing institutions, economic freedom and stability particularly after cessation of the Iraq-Iran war.

High Opec output may hit crude prices

LONDON, Jan 19, (Reuters): Opec is starting to trim excess oil production but it may not act quickly enough to keep crude prices from falling temporarily, industry sources say.

Reluctant to do its oil — the American Petroleum Institute (API) said yesterday that US imports reached a 10-year high in 1989 — the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to turn up the taps in recent months.

But with the northern winter half over and even allowing for lower Soviet exports, Opec risks producing too much before the summer driving season boosts petrol demand, market experts say.

Demand and prices rose recently as Arctic cold hit the United States. But milder weather has returned and API says US crude stocks rose by nearly three million barrels last week.

In reaction, New York February futures for West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the US benchmark crude, fell almost 60 cents to \$22.20 per barrel at one point on Wednesday.

Western oil company executives said it was still rather early to judge how far a new Opec output-cutting accord which took effect on January 1 had reduced volume.

But initial estimates suggested it was still between 23 and 23.5 million barrels per day (bpd). This would be down from December when it reached an eight-year record of almost 24 million, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The Opec ministers, however, had talked of cutting below 22.5 million bpd.

"The party may be over for the time being," said Nauman Barakat, a vice-president with trading house Shearson Lehman Hutton Inc., as New York futures slid on Wednesday. "But I see a correction not a collapse of prices."

Mehdi Vaziri, an analyst with London-based Kleinwort Benson Securities, said prices will be volatile. But he still thinks WTI will average a robust \$20 for the whole of 1990.

Permission to hold secret bank accounts

COLOMBO, Jan 19, (Reuters): The Sri Lankan government has given permission for foreigners to hold secret accounts in commercial banks, cabinet spokesman Ranjan Wijeratne said yesterday.

He said the cabinet had approved the proposal by Finance Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga at a meeting on Wednesday.

Wijeratne, who is also foreign minister, told reporters laws would be drafted to ensure the anonymity of account holders.

"This would attract large deposits from the international community which will help the island's economy," he said.

Dhaka to review law Ferry strike ends

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Jan 19, (AP): Ferry crews returned to work today, ending a three-day nation-wide strike after the government promised to review a law subjecting the workers to jail terms and fines for shipping accidents.

The strike had stranded thousands of people in this country where river ferries are a chief means of transport. The vessels are usually overcrowded and frequently sink.

"We have decided to postpone our work stoppage immediately after assurance from the government that the law will be reviewed," said Pratapbodin Sarkar, general secretary of the Bangladesh Inland Waterways Transport Workers Association.

The ferries started moving this morning when the 33,000 strikers returned to their jobs on 7,500 vessels.

The deadlock was broken during late-night talks Thursday between Labour Minister Sirajul Hossain Khan and strike leaders, a government statement said.

"The law that triggered the strike will be reviewed," the statement added.

Saudis stick to Opec accord

Riyadh aims at moderation

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 19, (AP): Saudi Arabia affirmed its adherence to production and pricing decisions made by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and urged all producers to co-operate in the interest of stable oil prices.

The official Saudi Press Agency, citing a "responsible source," which is taken to mean a government spokesman, said the kingdom "fully abides by the decision adopted by Opec and always calls on other oil producers outside Opec to co-operate with the organisation."

The November Opec conference gave Saudi Arabia an oil production quota of 5.38 million barrels per day for January to June 1990 as part of an aggregate production production ceiling for the 13 member states of 22 million barrels per day.

The aim is to balance supply and demand on the world market in the interest of stabilising prices at \$18 a barrel.

Referring to a recent report in a London industry newsletter that Saudi Arabia's production capacity will reach 8.5 million barrels a day by 1992, the statement said Saudi oil policy derives from Opec decisions.

"Saudi policy aims at moderation in setting oil production ceilings and as to the level of oil prices," the statement said.

In addition Saudi Arabia "would not sanction a policy of flooding the markets with oil since that would harm oil producers with limited production capacity," it said.

Referring to previous cutbacks in Saudi production, the statement said Saudi Arabia "worked tirelessly over past years to maintain balance in the oil market to achieve this principle, which left its economic interests facing grave sacrifices that all know about."

It was referring to the record drop in the kingdom's output to less than 2 million barrels per day in 1986 at a time when oil producers were engaged in an oil price war.

Saudi Arabia renewed its invitation to other Opec members to adhere to Opec decisions. It also urged all non-Opec oil producers to co-operate with the organisation "to help maintain the required balance between levels of output and achieve prices that serve the interests of all."

Experts see bright prospects

North Sea oil output to recover in '90

LONDON, Jan 19, (Reuters): Britain's North Sea oil output, a key counterweight to the country's big trade deficit, looks set to recover slightly this year from a 1989 slump.

A spate of accidents forced British offshore output down 21 per cent last year to average 1.91 million barrels per day (bpd), stockbrokers James Capel said this week. But Capel and other specialist analysts see improved prospects this year.

"1990 should be a better year all round for North Sea operators," said a report by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Royal Bank expects production between 1.95 and 2 million bpd, despite big maintenance shut-

owns, thanks to new fields and resumed flow at some platforms which are now closed.

Other analysts agree on a figure of around two million bpd, while Capel's petroleum services department sees output as high as 2.3 million bpd, barring further accidents.

Less oil from Britain, Western Europe's biggest producer, helped boost prices last year and while the trade balance sank deep in the red.

The government last November estimated its total oil trade surplus at £1.6 billion (\$1.6 billion).

The benchmark Brent crude oil blend is trading around \$20 a barrel after averaging around 18 in most of 1989.

American corporations may be sued for foreign bribery

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): A unanimous Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that American corporations may be sued for allegedly bribing foreign government officials.

The court permitted a lawsuit against W.S. Kirkpatrick and Co., which has been accused of bribing Nigerian government officials to win a contract in 1982 for development of a medical centre at Kaduna Air Force base in Nigeria.

The court held that a doctrine restricting US court review of foreign policy does not automatically shield corporations from such suits.

The act-of-state doctrine is designed to bar US courts from inquiring into the validity of a foreign government's acts committed within its own territory.

Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the court, said the doctrine does not bar a court from deciding the suit since "the validity of no foreign sovereign act is at issue."

The case might embarrass the Nigerian government, Scalia said. But that alone is not enough reason to kill the lawsuit.

"Act-of-state issues arise only when a court must decide... the effect of official action by a foreign sovereign," he said.

"The act-of-state doctrine does not establish an exception for cases and controversies that may embarrass foreign governments, but merely requires that, in the process of deciding, the acts of foreign sovereigns taken within their own jurisdictions shall be deemed valid."

Scalia noted that over the years the interpretation of the doctrine has changed so that recently the high court has used it to guarantee separation of powers between three branches of government.

The idea is to assure that courts will not interfere improperly in the President's conduct of foreign affairs, Scalia said. He

noted that the administration of President George Bush, and particularly the State Department, do not oppose the suit against the Kirkpatrick Company.

Environmental Technics submitted a lower bid than Kirkpatrick for the Nigerian project and said it would have won the contract but for Kirkpatrick's bribery of Nigerian officials.

The Justice Department investigated the contract, prompting the company and its chief executive, Harry Carpenter, to plead guilty to one count of violating the foreign corrupt practices act. Kirkpatrick was fined \$75,000.

Nikkei breaks losing streak

TOKYO, Jan 19, (Reuters): Signs that yen bond yields may have peaked helped the Nikkei average break a four-day losing streak to close higher in light trade today. The dollar was steady and bond prices rallied in the afternoon.

Index-linked buying by a major foreign and leading Japanese securities houses took the key Nikkei well into the positive side just at the close.

But the broader market declined, with more stocks posting losses than gains. Brokers say they are still cautious.

"It's too early to assume we're out of the woods," said Nick Akers, head of research for James Capel Pacific.

The 225-share Nikkei jumped 107.08 points or 0.29 pct to close at 36,836.54 after dropping 91.68 points on Thursday. The Nikkei dropped a total of 680.23 points in the week. Monday was a holiday.

"Volume is still very small, so people are not totally confident in a rebound," said Masatoshi Nakamura, manager of international trading for Goldman Sachs (Japan). Turnover was a light 500 million shares against 530 million on Thursday.

Surging yen bond yields struck a wall at seven per cent and began to turn down late in the morning, heartening stock investors. A sharp dollar rise overnight, and the assumption that it would ignite a further sell-off of yen bonds, had pressured the Nikkei down as much as 364.29 points earlier.

The key 119th Japanese government bond recovered sharply in the afternoon, with its yield falling to a low of 6.70 per cent. Its high yield on Tuesday was 7.05 per cent.

The bond market rebound took off after news Japan's money supply grew 10.6 per cent in December. While that figure was the highest since October 1988, it was less than the 11 per cent rumours that had circulated in the market earlier, and cleared away some of the negative sentiment.

"The (stock) market is obviously taking its cue from the currency and bond markets," said a trader at S.G. Warburg Securities.

"Gold was higher in Tokyo, with the dollar up against the yen, and the Nikkei rose against the dollar in New York on Thursday."

Oil price decline predicted

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (UPI): A leading oil trader forecast yesterday that crude oil prices will drop more than 25 per cent in the next six months and then more than double in the 1990s in oil's "last hurrah" as an energy source.

"I believe very strongly that this is going to be both the decade of oil's pre-eminence and its demise," Peter Beutel of Elders Futures in New York told a news briefing of energy reporters.

"It's my very firm opinion that the 1990s may well be oil's kind of 'last hurrah'," the analyst and trader on the New York Mercantile Exchange said. "We're coming into the last 'bull market' for oil."

He said there was "better than a 50-50 chance crude prices will fall to \$15 a barrel in the next six months," a drop sufficient to spur the 13-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to discipline overproducing members. Opec pumps more than one-third of the world's oil.

Nisshin Steel chief Abe dies

TOKYO, Jan 19, (AP): Nisshin Steel Co. chairman Yuzuru Abe, who led Japanese steelmakers in investing in the United States, has died at 73, the company said yesterday.

Abe died at his home in Tokyo Sunday of a liver ailment, it said. Abe, a native of southwestern Fukushima, joined Nihon Seitetsu, then Japan's leading steelmaker, in 1938 after graduation from Tokyo University.

In 1970, Abe became an executive director of Nippon Steel Corp., which became the nation's largest steelmaker when it was formed by a merger between Yawata Seitetsu and Fuji Seitetsu. Those two steel producers had been formed when US occupation authorities ordered Nihon Seitetsu split after World War II.

Abe became an executive vice president of Nippon Steel in 1977 and in 1980 moved to Nisshin Steel as president. He has been chairman of the company since 1983.

Under Abe's leadership, Nisshin Steel became the first of Japan's leading steelmakers to launch a joint venture in the United States.

Iran allots \$5.7b

NICOSIA, Jan 19, (Reuters): Iran has allotted 400 billion rials (\$5.7 billion at the official exchange rate) to build oil and gas refineries and a lubricant production unit in the year starting March 21, Tehran radio said today.

The money will be spent on oil refineries in Arak and Bandar Abbas, the second phase of Kangan gas refinery on the Gulf coast and the lubricant unit at Isfahan oil refinery.

The radio did not say how much of the expenditure would be in foreign exchange. The budget was approved by a board meeting of the National Iranian Oil Company, chaired by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

SHIPPING MOVEMENTS

SHIPS DISCHARGING AT SHUWAIKH PORT AS ON 19/1/90				
B.No.	Ship Name	Agent	Agent	Tel. No.
14	Tekouzo Oostvink	Agent	A. Seas	2431303
SHIPS EXPECTED AT SHUWAIKH PORT				
B.No.	Ship Name	Agent	Agent	Tel. No.
18/01	Norasia Arabia	Emad	4841873	
19/01	Mulberry	KMMC	2432435	
19/01	Nikolay Shchukin	Al Rashid	2422026	
SHIPS DISCHARGING AT DUBAIA PORT				
02	South Wind	Martini Int'l	2465645	
03	Omnum Pride	ISA	2441860	
09	Handy Seal	Al Rashid	2422026	
11	Sakko Hefaz	SMS	4745471	

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2466880 am; 5613917 pm.

Islamic banking grows in Ankara

ANKARA, Jan 19, (Reuters): In a thriving bank in secular Turkey, managers sit at a desk beneath framed quotes from the Holy Quran and many of the customers have close-cropped beards—a badge of Muslim fundamentalism.

"I keep my money here because it is not sinful and I want to comply with my religion," said a client at the Ankara branch of Faisal Finance House, one of the country's three Islamic banks.

Islamic banks form a small part of the banking sector, but are growing quickly. Their success worries conventional bankers, and for some it has a disturbing political significance.

"With Islamic banks, religious exploitation in political life has spread to the financial system," Abdullahi Ates, of the opposition Social Democrat Populist Party, told Reuters.

"These banks are collecting funds by exploiting people's religious beliefs. We plan to bring up the issue in Parliament."

Islamic banks do not pay interest or make interest-bearing investments, both forbidden by Islam. Their customers instead share the banks' profits or losses.

And depositors with Islamic banks, which benefit more from relaxed regulations than other banks, have so far been well rewarded.

All three Istanbul-based banks told Reuters they had been so successful that they planned to open new branches this year. They now have a total of 15.

Saudi Arabian-backed Faisal Finance was the first to open, after a 1983 government decree relaxing banking regulations.

In 1985 it was followed by Al Baraka Turkish Finance House, also Saudi backed. The Kuwaiti-Turkish Ekvaf Finance House opened last year.

By the end of 1989 the three banks had captured 1.3 per cent of Turkish lira deposits, which totalled 41.4 trillion lira (\$17.85 billion), according to published figures.

Islamic banks operate outside banking and capital markets laws that restrict the other 62 banks operating in Turkey.

"Since we invest in industrial companies by trading or forming partnerships, we run a lesser risk than other banks," Yunos Nacar, assistant general manager of Kuwaiti-Turkish Ekvaf, told Reuters.

He said his bank paid a semi-annual net profit share of 28 per cent last year. Interest offered by non-Islamic banks for the same period averaged 23 per cent.

Ahmet Tekay, manager of Al Baraka's Ankara branch, said about 30 per cent of his customers used his bank because of the high return it gave, rather than just for religious reasons.

"I used to use a (non-Islamic) bank. Net interest rates on three-month deposits were around 41-42 per cent annually," a Faisal client told Reuters. "Now I have switched to an Islamic bank which pays about 49 per cent annually."

Non-Islamic bankers said Islamic banks enjoyed low funding costs because the 1983 decree gave them relaxed reserve requirement ratios.

"Islamic banks' profit margin is lower than others."

Current Rates

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): Following are the international currency rates as quoted by local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait yesterday.			
	Buying	Selling	
US dollar	0.29102	0.29217	
Sterling	0.479018	0.48208	
DM	0.17191	0.172677	
FFr	0.005274	0.005812	
ILira	0.0002300	0.0002330	
Japan	0.001995	0.002008	
Bah. dia	0.71731	0.715398	
UAE Dir.	0.079210	0.079566	
S. ryal	0.077563	0.077932	
Q. ryal	0.079906	0.080310	
O. ryal	0.755601	0.759277	

Interest Rates

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): Following are the average KD interest rates of local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait yesterday.			
Period	Bid	Offered	
1 month	8-1/16	8-1/16	
3 months	8-1/16	8-1/16	
6 months	8-1/4	8-1/2	
1 year	8-1/4	8-1/2	

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Egyptian minister meets IMF chief on debt

IMF approves \$20m loan for Mali

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid went to see the head of the International Monetary Fund yesterday to talk about his country's \$50 billion debt, one of the largest in the Third World.

Abdel-Meguid has been in Washington to help get the Arab-Israeli peace process moving. He will see Secretary of State James A. Baker III today for the second time this week.

A source close to the fund said the minister spent almost two hours with Michel Camdessus, its managing director. The source, who spoke on condition he not be named, said they went over the Egyptian policy programme that officials have been discussing with the fund for over a year.

He added that they agreed on another negotiations session to take place after a visit to Egypt from the fund's sister organisation, the World Bank, at the end of this month.

The fund requires a series of policy promises from a borrowing government before it makes a loan. The conditions are usually not published, but are available

to other creditors. The fact that the fund is willing to make a loan is taken by the others as a signal that the borrowing country's policies have international approval.

In Egypt's case a new loan from the fund would open the way for postponement of payments on its old debt. Other governments were the major lenders, especially the United States. Only about a third of the old debt is owed to banks and other private creditors, according to World Bank figures.

The source said he could not give the amount of the new loan that Egypt is seeking from the fund.

Members of Abdel-Meguid's delegation went to the headquarters of the World Bank on Wednesday to talk about a new \$300 million loan. The bank calculates that at the end of 1988, Egypt had a foreign debt of \$49.97 billion, including \$2.12 billion in overdue interest.

Contrary to expectations, the foreign minister himself went to see Camdessus, who recently completed negotiations on a new loan to Poland. Poland owed

\$42.33 billion at the end of 1988. Last March, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he accepted the policy changes the fund required as a condition for its loans, but the fund wanted them installed too fast.

"Some price reforms the IMF is asking of us would mean increasing some prices seven-fold," he told reporters at the time.

Fund officials say that when they ask a government to reduce its budget deficit, it is the government that must choose where to cut its spending: whether on food subsidies, schools, the military or other items.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund yesterday announced a \$20 million loan for the government of Mali in support of the West African country's economic reform programme.

The IMF approved in August 1988 a \$46 million financial package for Mali from the fund's structural adjustment facility, to be disbursed over three years. Thursday's \$20 million loan is the second portion of the 1988 package, from which Mali has

drawn already \$13 million. The fund's staff provides balance of payments assistance on concessional terms to low-income countries.

The multilateral organisation said that in 1989 Mali achieved a "marked turnaround" in its economic and financial position.

Wide ranging structural and macroeconomic measures, combined with good weather conditions, contributed to a 9.9 per cent economic growth, a decline in inflation, and a strengthening in the balance of payments.

The programme for 1990 aims at a further economic growth, even though agricultural production is expected to revert to a normal level following the bumper harvest of 1988/89.

According to the IMF, Mali's structural policies include the further liberalisation of price controls and the streamlining of regulatory procedures, the reduction of distortions in the agricultural sector, public enterprise reform and the implementation of a public investment programme favouring the productive sectors of the economy.



Picture shows International Monetary Fund managing director Michel Camdessus (left) greeting Egyptian Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid

Banks' aggregate balance sheet rises

Local assets growing

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (Kuna): The Central Bank of Kuwait has said that the total aggregate balance sheet of local banks (commercial and specialised) reached KD 13,636 million at the end of November 1989, realising — for the tenth successive month — an increase of KD212 million (1.6 per cent) over its level in the previous month.

This increase is attributed to the growth realised by the balance sheets of commercial banks (KD188 million) and specialised banks (KD24 million), the monthly Monetary Review released by CBK said.

It added the increase in the total aggregate balance sheet of local banks on the side of assets, can be attributed to an increase of KD335 million (3.3 per cent) in local assets, against a decrease of KD123 million (3.8 per cent) in foreign assets. On the side of liabilities, it can be attributed to an increase of KD247 million (2.1 per cent) in local liabilities, against a decrease of KD35 million (1.9 per cent) in foreign liabilities below their levels in the previous month.

Thus, the ratio of local activity regarding fund resources and uses increased to 79.6 per cent in

November 1989, exceeding its level (72.5 per cent) in the previous month, against a decline in the ratio of foreign activity from 27.5 per cent to 20.4 per cent in this month.

Further, it was noticed that 68.2 per cent of total fund resources at these banks came from local resources and 91 per cent of total fund uses was directed to local uses.

On the other hand, the Central Bank's claims in KD on local banks increased in discount and rediscount operations, (KD35 million) and swap operations (KD64 million) the Review said.

Meanwhile, local banks' claims on the Central Bank decreased by KD 1 million, increasing the net balance of the Central Bank with local banks by KD100 million over the previous month, it added.

As for public debt instruments, the Central Bank of Kuwait offered in November 1989 five issues of treasury bills (from issue No. 76 to issue No. 80), totalling KD830 million. Meanwhile, five previous issues of these bills (from issue No. 63 to issue No. 67) matured during the same month, totalling KD794.7 million. Thus, the outstanding

balance of these bills increased to KD1,721.25 million, an increase of KD353.3 million (2.1 per cent) over the previous month.

The balance of treasury bond issues remained at its level (KD445 million) recorded in the previous month, as no issues of these bonds matured or were offered during November 1989.

Thus, the outstanding balance of public debt instruments (treasury bills and bonds) totalled KD1,666.25 million at the end of November 1989 due to the increased balance of bills only, the report said.

It added that money supply increased slightly in November 1989 (KD13 million) over the previous month, totalling KD5,321 million.

This increase resulted from developments in money supply components as money supply components in KD increased (KD29 million), particularly in money (eight deposits and currency in circulation), against a decline (KD16 million) in deposits denominated in foreign currencies.

On the level of interest rates in the money market, the review said averages of interbank rates on KD deposits recorded in

November 1989 a slight increase on various maturities, ranging between 0.26 per cent (from 8.38 per cent to 8.40 per cent) on one-year deposits and 1.73 per cent (from 8.31 per cent to 8.46 per cent) on the one-week deposits.

This slight increase in interest rates on KD was associated with an increase in intercommercial bank KD deposits, whose balance rose at the end of November 1989 by 15 per cent (KD 86 million) against 2.8 per cent in the previous month, it pointed out.

During November 1989, the KD exchange rate increased against the pound sterling (1.06 per cent) and the Japanese yen (1.01 per cent).

Meanwhile, it declined slightly against other major currencies at varied rates, ranging between 0.22 per cent against the US dollar (whose average exchange rate was 298.4 fils against 297.77 fils in the previous month) and 1.74 per cent against the Deutsche mark.

These rates were 1.72 per cent, 1.67 per cent and 0.69 per cent against the French franc, the Italian lira and the Swiss franc respectively, the review concluded.

American consumer prices up

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (Reuters): Consumer prices in the United States increased faster in 1989 than any year since 1981 and housing starts stood at their lowest level since a recession seven years ago, the government said yesterday.

Analysts said the two negative economic indicators were likely to prevent the Central Bank from cutting interest rates any time soon.

Gains in the cost of a broad range of goods, including fruits and vegetables affected by an Arctic freeze, pushed the consumer price index up 0.4 per cent in December, the same rise reported for November, the Labour Department said.

The December increase brought the yearlong gain in the index — the most widely used measure of inflation — to 4.6 per cent versus 4.4 per cent in 1988. It was the biggest yearly advance since 1981, when consumer prices rose 8.9 per cent.

New home construction fell 8.0 per cent in December after a 5.7 per cent drop in November, the Commerce Department said, leaving total 1989 housing starts at their lowest level since 1982.

Despite the apparent slowing of the economy, which normally dampens price rises, inflation remained a problem likely to prevent the Central Bank from cutting interest rates any time soon, analysts said.

Special factors drove food and energy prices higher in December, with an Arctic cold snap damaging crops and boosting demand for fuel.

But even after subtracting the volatile food and energy price components, the so-called core rate of inflation still rose 0.4 per cent last month, matching the November increase.

Trade surplus shrinks 17pc

TOKYO, Jan 19, (Reuters): Japan's customs-cleared trade surplus shrank 17 per cent to \$64.43 billion in 1989 from 77.56 billion a year earlier, the Finance Ministry said today.

The surplus with the United States decreased to \$45 billion last year from \$47.60 billion in 1988.

In December, Japan's trade surplus narrowed to an unadjusted \$6.19 billion from 9.72 billion a year earlier, and to an adjusted 4.09 billion from 4.7 billion a month earlier, the ministry also reported.

The surplus with the United States, Japan's main trading partner, decreased to \$3.83 billion in December from 5.04 billion a year ago.

Overall exports dropped six per cent to \$24.59 billion from 26.17 billion a year earlier.

'Inflation rate less than 1pc'

NICOSIA, Jan 19, (Reuters): Saudi Arabia's inflation rate is less than one per cent, according to Minister of Commerce Suleiman Abdulaziz Al Salim.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted Salim as telling Saudi television that the low inflation was a result of the kingdom's open market policies.

"The kingdom's inflation is less than one per cent and that is because of its open-market policy, free trade and honest competition..." SPA, received in Nicosia, quoted him as saying.

Foreign banks face gloomy future in Egypt, say analysts

CAIRO, Jan 19, (Reuters): Sixteen years after Egypt threw open its doors to foreign business, foreign banks are either heading for the back door or waiting nervously in the hallway.

Industry analysts say that as Egypt sinks into recession, there is little business left for foreign banks. They say a few could close, while others in joint ventures with Egyptian banks seek to merge to build bigger groups.

"In my opinion, we are overbanked. There is no space for the smaller entities," said Mahmoud Abdel-Aziz, deputy chairman of the National Bank of Egypt.

Foreign banks rushed into Egypt after 1974 to cash in on a spending spree unleashed by the "open door" policy of then President Anwar Sadat, who threw open the country to foreign and private investment after two decades of Soviet-backed socialism.

But now Egypt is burdened with \$50 billion worth of foreign debt. Foreign trade, the linchpin of foreign banking, is dwindling, and there are just too many banks around.

Many foreign banks reduced operations after a 1987 foreign exchange reform made it harder to acquire hard currency.

American bank Chase Manhattan sold its stake in its Egyptian joint venture two years ago and others cut staff.

In December, British-based Lloyds Bank said it was closing its Cairo branch and Bank of America sold its stake in its Egyptian joint venture, Misr America International Bank.

Both said their decisions had nothing to do with market conditions in Egypt. Those which stay face tight competition from more than 90 other banks. Even then, "big four" public-sector banks Banque du Alexandria, the National

Bank of Egypt, Bank Misr and Banque du Caire — have 80 per cent of the market.

Overseas banks, facing an economy which often confounds Western logic, are also competing against big Egyptian banks more used to finding a way through the chaotic bureaucracy.

Described by one Western diplomat as "the richest bankrupt country in the world," Egypt is perched between old-style socialism and liberal free-market reforms, and between a near-bankrupt government and obvious private wealth.

And they are trying to compete in a country where the banking system remains relatively unsophisticated.

Some banks are still not computerised. Even cashing a foreign bank draft can take more than an hour as clerks run with pieces of paper from one Kafkaesque

office to another.

Ironically in cash-starved Egypt, banks are liquid in dollars — Aziz estimated deposits at \$12 billion. Another senior banker said deposits in both Egyptian pounds and dollars rose 20 per cent last year.

But most of the money is held on short-term deposits and is not available for long-term investment lending.

Foreign banks are divided into two categories — those with independent branches and those in joint ventures where the Egyptian side holds more than 50 per cent of the shareholding.

The most handicapped are the independent branches which are not allowed to deal in Egyptian pounds and have only limited access to an official foreign exchange pool.

The pool, introduced after the 1987 foreign exchange reforms, is open only to joint ventures and Egyptian banks.

That means their customers often have to seek foreign exchange elsewhere — usually on the black market.

"With the new foreign exchange system, their role is a bit lower than before," Aziz said.

Analysts say that at least one or two branches could close, although Arab banks and state-owned French and Italian banks are likely to stay, if only as a political gesture of support.

Even in joint ventures, many are wary of lending heavily in a country where there is little investor confidence and where they face a web of regulations on lending in Egyptian pounds.

As a result many joint ventures compete with the independent branches at the periphery of the market.

Few are expected to brave the bureaucratic nightmare of pulling out of a joint venture.

Investcorp buys 30pc of Computacenter

INVESTCORP, the international investment bank, announced in London recently that it has invested £22 million to acquire 30 per cent of the equity of Computacenter Limited, an affiliate of Computacenter Limited. The transaction values the Computacenter group in excess of £80 million and the new funds provided will significantly increase the net capital position of the company.

Computacenter, a private group, was founded in 1981. It is the UK's leading systems integrator, providing a full range of microcomputer related services to large corporate and public sector clients. Computacenter designs, implements and supports systems on a nation-wide basis and is committed to providing superior and cost effective solutions to its customers.

Computacenter is IBM's largest dealer in the UK and is the only company to have received IBM's coveted Quality Dealer of the Year award twice.

Group sales have increased from £11.4 million in 1985 to an estimated £155 million for the year ending December 31, 1989. Company sources estimate that operating income for the year will exceed £9.5 million.

As a result of its purchase, Investcorp becomes the largest shareholder in Computacenter. It joins a shareholder group comprising the two founders, Peter Ogden and Philip Hulme; members of management and funds advised by Alan Patricio Associates Ltd, Foreign & Colonial Ventures Ltd and Baring Capital Investors Ltd.

Computacenter's managing director, Philip Hulme, said: "We believe it is important at this stage in the company's development to maintain our status as a private company. To succeed in this industry you must have a sound strategy to begin with and then stick with it. As a private company you can afford to take the long-term view."

Peter Ogden, Computacenter's chairman, said: "In 1989 we created major investment opportunities, both in the opening of our AS/400 Agency for IBM mid-range machines and the formation of our European joint venture, ICG, with Compuserve, Germany and Random France. Investcorp's participation provides the capital we need to continue our rapid growth, as well as a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the European market place."

Cem Casmik, a member of Investcorp's management committee, said: "We are very excited about the prospects for a strong player such as Computacenter in the context of a consolidating PC market in Europe and the boom in demand which we expect to continue post-1992."

Investcorp, which has offices in New York, London and Bahrain, provides investment and advisory services for clients internationally. Acting as a principal and intermediary, Investcorp engages in direct corporate investment, real estate investment, trading activities and fund management.

Some of Investcorp's other corporate investments have included: Carvel Corporation; Colton Tire, Inc.; Sports Unlimited; Mueller Co. and Peckles in the United States and, in Europe, Thelma Industries and Chaumet in France; Gucci and Riva Yachts in Italy and International Leisure Group in the UK.

Bombay shares

Bombay Stock Exchange prices (Rs) Jan 18, 1990			
ACC	Fr. Close	Op. Close	
Alum Chem	341	345	341
Alu Nit	—	—	—
Ashtek	—	—	—
Ashtek Ltd	97.50	96	96
Asia Palm	237.50	236.25	236.25
Asia Corp	42	42	43
Asia Ind	56.25	56.75	56.75
Auto Corp	410.33	407.50	407.50
Bajaj Auto	410	417.50	405
Bar Rayon	755	760	735
Blow Plast	218.50	220	123.5

VARIETY

Siberian cranes: victims of wars

BHARATPUR, India, (AP): The herds of western India are the favorite wintering ground of the Siberian crane, a majestic and serious bird with a white body, a black beak and a haunting cry. But fewer and fewer of the birds are being sighted, and some wildlife rangers fear they have become likely casualties of war, dying in the skies over Afghanistan.

Only 17 cranes arrived this winter at the Keoladeo National Park at Bharatpur, once a duck-shooting reserve of maharajahs and now a sanctuary for more than 400 bird species.

V.S. Vijayan, a scientist with the Bombay Natural History Society, has been working at Bharatpur, and last season there were 24 cranes, 31 the season before that.

Like the Afghanistan war itself, a puzzle of the Siberian cranes has been the theory that the birds are falling victim to Afghan gunners, as well as to an American anti-aircraft missile. Some Indian wildlife officials and environmentalists agree. But a Viet scientist has rejected the story.

Indian officials also said recurring drought in Bharatpur may be contributing to the decline. Ornithologists know little about cranes, which fly from their breeding ground in the tundras of Siberia to Bharatpur in India's western Rajasthan state. It is a journey of more than 5,000 kilometres (3,100 miles) and takes out a month.

A smaller flock migrates to Iran, where two flocks leave their Siberian me in the Ob river valley in September or October, just as the snow begins to fall. They return in late February or early March.

The India-bound flock probably takes only two stopovers — in Soviet Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, according to Vladimir Flint, chief of the Soviet's Animal Protection Department at the All-Union research Institute of Nature Conservation and Reserves in Moscow.

There are no precise estimates of the number of western Siberian cranes. Harris put the figure at fewer than 50 altogether, but other estimates place it as high as 200.

30 years old and never been kissed



Uderzo kneels with Asterix (left) and Obelix (Reuter wirephoto)

Asterix the Gaul

PARIS, (Reuter): Asterix, the diminutive comic-strip hero who defends a tiny Gallic village from the might of the Roman empire, has reached the age of 30 without falling in love.

"Real heroes can never fall in love," said cartoonist Albert Uderzo, who co-created the brawny little Gaul in 1959 and has since sketched him through 28 adventures which have enthralled children and adults alike.

"If that happened he'd get married and settle down, and then he'd stop having adventures," added Uderzo, 62, whose creation had fought gladiators in Rome, toyed with the wrath of Queen Cleopatra in Egypt and narrowly avoided falling into a huge cheese fondue in Switzerland.

Asterix, who celebrated his 30th birthday last October, has been translated into 40 languages and stars in six films and endless cartoon strips.

"The only alternative would be to keep killing my heroines, and that would cause me a lot of pain," smiled the artist, who has both written and drawn the cartoon books since his colleague Rene Goscinny died in 1977.

"Unfortunately I'm working alone now, it's very difficult for me," Uderzo said in an interview. "But I try to stay as faithful as possible to the spirit we created together."

Goscinny and Uderzo met in 1950s, when they were both drawing and writing cartoon strips. We discovered that I liked drawing more and he liked writing, so we decided to join our talents," Uderzo said.

As youngsters both men were greatly influenced by Walt Disney and later drew much of their inspiration from his cartoon creations.

They worked on various scenarios and characters before hitting on the winning formula — a tiny Gaul and his huge right-hand man Obelix who manage to keep the invading Romans from the village gates with the help of a magic potion brewed by the local druid.

"We both loved Walt Disney, but we wanted to find something with a European flavour. We settled on Gaul (the name given to France at the time of the Roman Empire) because so little is known about that period. We could invent what we liked without the danger of historians constantly correcting us," Uderzo said.

But the pair did extensive research on the Roman Empire, which occupied Gaul at the time the adventures are set, around 50 BC.

Although Asterix was the first character created by Uderzo, he admits his personal favourite is the overweight, ginger-pigtailed Obelix.

"His egg-shaped body is perfect for a cartoonist, and he's got all the faults under the sun. We all like naive characters because they make us feel clever," he said.

Uderzo's office walls are covered in sketches from the cartoon books, loved by children for their exciting storylines and by adults for their caustic and witty humour.

"I wanted to be a clown when I was a child and I suppose I've fulfilled my ambition by ending up drawing them."

Many of the laughs come from the wordplays on the character's names, thought up by Goscinny. Asterix' corpulent village chief is called Vitalstatistix, while the village druid who dishes out magic potion is called Getafix.

The local bard, who torments everyone with his off-tune singing during the traditional Gallic feast that ends every adventure, is suitably named Cacofonix.

Uderzo and fans celebrated Asterix' birthday with a big cake at the Asterix Amusement Park, which opened on the outskirts of Paris last April and already draws 18,000 visitors a year.

Uderzo says he hasn't groomed anyone to take over from him. But for the moment there's no danger he will run out of ideas: he's already planning a 29th book for this year.

'Pump Up the Jam' tops US pop chart

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): "Pump Up the Jam" by Technobronic took over the top of the US pop singles record chart in the United States Wednesday. The disc moved up from sixth position on the previous listing.

"Another Day In Paradise" by Phil Collins slipped to second on the Cash Box magazine chart from number one, and the "Don't Know Much" duet by Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville went down from second to third.

The only newcomer to the top 10 list — the first in three weeks due to the Christmas and New Year holidays — was "Everyting" by Jody Watley, up from 69th place on the previous chart.

As for the country-and-western singles, Vern Gosdin took over the number one spot on the Cash Box magazine chart with "That Just About Does It."

Highway 101 was in second position with "Who's Lonely Now," while Keith Whitley's "It Ain't Nothin'" was third.

The top 10 pop singles, as rated by Cash Box magazine, with last week's positions in brackets:

1. (6) Pump Up the Jam — Technobronic (SBK).
2. (1) Another Day In Paradise — Phil Collins (Atlantic).
3. (2) Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville (Elektra).
4. (3) Rhythm Nation — Janet Jackson (A&M).
5. (10) How Am I Supposed to Live Without You — Michel Bolton (Columbia).
6. (4) Just Like Jesse James — Cher (Geffen).
7. (8) Just Between You and Me — Lou Gramm (Atlantic).
8. (5) With Every Beat Of My Heart — Taylor Dayne (Arista).
9. (7) This One's For The Children — New Kids on the Block (Columbia).
10. (69) Everything — Jody Watley (MCA).

The top 10 country-western singles, as rated by Cash Box magazine, with last week's positions in brackets:

1. (4) That Just About Does It — Vern Gosdin (Columbia).
2. (2) Who's Lonely Now — Highway 101 (Warner Brothers).

3. (6) It Ain't Nothin' — Keith Whitley (RCA).

4. (9) It's You Again — Skip Ewing (MCA).

5. (7) Many A Long And Lonesome Highway — Rodney Crowell (Columbia).

6. (1) Out Of Your Shoes — Lorrie Morgan (RCA).

7. (10) Nobody's Home — Clint Black (RCA).

8. (11) My Arms Stay Open All Night — Tanya Tucker (Capitol).

9. (3) A Woman In Love — Ronnie Milsap (RCA).

10. (15) When I Could Come Home To You — Steve Wariner (MCA).

In London, New Kids on the Block, the Boston anti-drugs, anti-drink rock band, moved into the number one spot in the British pop singles chart with their fast-selling "Hangin' Tough."

Last week's chart topper, "Get A Life" by Souk II Soul, was pushed back to fourth place by the entry of two new singles.

Australian teen idol Kyle Minogue zoomed into second place with "Tears On My Pillow," and the New York City group Mantronix featuring Wondress entered the charts in third place with "Got To Have Your Love."

This week's top 10 singles, as listed by Our Price Music Ltd, the national music retail chain, with last week's places in parentheses:

1. (2) Hangin' Tough — New Kids on the Block (CBS).
2. (1) Tears On My Pillow — Kyle Minogue (PWL).
3. (1) Got To Have Your Love — Mantronix featuring Wondress (Capitol).
4. (11) Get A Life — Souk II Soul (10 Records).
5. (3) The Magic Number — De La Soul (Big Life-Tommy B).
6. (4) Got To Get — Leila K. feat. Rob 'N' Raz (Arista).
7. (15) Butterfly On A Wheel — Mission (Mercury).
8. (11) Touch Me — 49ers (Fourth and Broadway).
9. (10) Going Back To My Roots — FPI Project-Rich in Paradise (Runour).
10. (8) 20 Seconds To Comply — Silver Bullet (Tam Tam).

Taiwan planners going after their wilder dreams

TAIPEI, (Reuter): Newly rich Taiwan intends to have the world's tallest building, its own Las Vegas and a statue of liberty with a laser beam torch and a planetarium in its head.

After decades of penny-pinching, Taiwan's planners are joyfully pursuing some of their wilder dreams.

"It's no problem for us to make this kind of idea come true," said Jeff Chia, an official in the Taipei Mass-transit Development Office. "The money is not a problem, anyway."

Chia is behind the plan to erect a 126-storey skyscraper in the middle of Taipei, a conglomerate of concrete apartment blocks described by one guide book as "a drab and polluted city of 2.2 million."

The proposed structure would shoulder aside Chicago's Sears Tower (110 storeys) as the world's tallest office building and would top Taipei's current tallest building by a neat 100 storeys.

It would also, according to its advocates, earn Taiwan the respect the island deserves as an economic power.

"The building could serve as a new landmark for Taipei," Chia said. "It would also allow us to bring in the technology and management techniques for high-rise buildings."

The \$770 million US development project, linked to Taipei's new rapid-transit system, would require heavy private investment. It is now in the final planning stages before being submitted to the mayor's office.

The plan is not without its critics. Many say Taipei has no business erecting the tallest building in the world when it hasn't solved basic problems like traffic, housing and sanitation.

Some, such as the English-language China Post newspaper, sniff that the grandiose scheme reveals Taiwan's "nouveau riche mentality."

"Such a display would be tasteless," the newspaper said in a recent editorial.

Others, citing Taiwan's frequent typhoons and the city's precarious position atop the Pacific earthquake belt, say the plan is simply unworkable.

Taiwan's civil engineers are unlikely to be put off by the naysayers and with export earnings now \$73 billion US a year, Taiwan's 20 million people can be forgiven for thinking nothing is impossible.

Taipei has designed, built and flown its own jet fighter. Officials are toying with plans to launch a locally built satellite into orbit within the decade.

On the ground, Taiwan is in the midst of a feverish building boom, sprouting ornate office and residential complexes with names such as "Eternal Atom Tycoon" and "Oriental Technopolis."

To give executives and residents in these developments a flashy place to play, Taipei's director of public works has proposed a "Taiwan Las Vegas."

Pan Li-Man was impressed with the real Las Vegas, which he visited while studying post-earthquake rehabilitation plans on the US West Coast.

Now he wants to duplicate the gambling city on a muddy islet in Taipei's Tamsui River, envisioning the 320-hectare (790-acre) island studded with casinos and sporting Taiwan's first horse-racing track.

"Actually, we are in a much better position than Las Vegas," Pan said. "All they've got is a desert. We will have the river and beautiful mountain views."

He said the gambling centre would be an outlet for Taiwan's frustrated punters and provide the island with a new tourist attraction. "If you want people to visit, you've got to give them something fun to do," he said.

Taipei Mayor Wu Po-Hsiung has approved the \$380 million US project, which would involve raising the entire island by six metres (20 feet) to prevent disaster when the filthy river breaks its banks during the rainy season.

The plan now must be passed by the Taipei City Council and the Interior Ministry. "We don't anticipate they will block us," Pan said.

Another lofty project is the campaign to build a new Statue of Liberty in the southern port city of Kaohsiung.

"Taiwan is liberty island for all Chinese," said financier Susa Suga Chen, the main force behind the project.

Ernst Neizvestny, a Russian emigre sculptor whose most famous work is the tombstone of former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, has designed the statue, which would be of a male figure rising from an abstract metal form.

Like the original Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour, the 46-metre (152-foot) Asian model would hold a torch.

The statue would be made out of the molded metal used to build airplanes and inside the body there would be an aquarium, a film theatre, a restaurant and an exhibition hall.

The head would contain a planetarium and an observation deck from which to view the laser show emitted by the torch.

All eyes on camera-shy Montana

PARIS, (Reuter): French designers are cursing as they put the last touches to their masterpieces — they know all eyes will be on camera-shy stylist Claude Montana when he makes his first venture into haute couture next week.

Montana, one of the most influential designers in moderately priced ready-to-wear, will unveil his first individually-tailored line on Tuesday during the spring and summer collections.

Fashion experts say Montana's debut for fashion house Lanvin is one of the most exciting developments in the elite world of haute couture since compatriot Christian Lacroix launched his own line to hysterical press reviews in 1987.

The quietly-spoken Montana helped shape what is now regarded as the silhouette of the 1980s — the big-shouldered, sharp-waisted look seized on by women wanting to assert themselves in boardrooms and offices.

Many hope he will bring some order to fashion in the 1990s by helping to focus style concepts now shooting off in a hundred different directions.

The 40-year-old designer, instantly recognisable by his favourite cowboys boots and tough biker's jacket, was recruited in October by Lanvin in a drive to revamp its faded image with the new financial backing of Britain's Midland Bank.

Montana leapt at the chance to cast aside price restraints and follow his art where it led him. Although there are only 3,000 women in the world who can afford to buy haute couture, designers aspire to its cachet and the chance to indulge their wildest fantasies.

Montana has promised a structured collection with an emphasis on earth tones. "It's rather sophisticated and it's all about colour," he told Women's Wear daily.

The fashion press are so excited about Montana that they are in danger of ignoring another interesting arrival — Italian designer Gianni Versace's first haute couture collection in Paris on Saturday night.

The 42-year-old stylist, who was born in the south of Italy but established his name in Milan, is the latest in a series of Italian designers including Valentino, Gianfranco Ferré and Romeo Gigli to decide that Paris is a fashion must.

Versace will show strong colours, an emphasis on leather and plenty of classical "Versace jackets" in dramatic black.

As the future opens up for some fashion celebrities, the curtain is coming down on some other star performers.

The death of popular American designer Patrick Kelly, who lost a battle against cancer on January 1, has cast a shadow over the spring collections. Ailing fashion matriarch Madame Gres will once again be unable to present a line, and

many fear her designing days are over.

Chanel's former sprite, effervescent model Ines de la Fressange — has also made her exit.

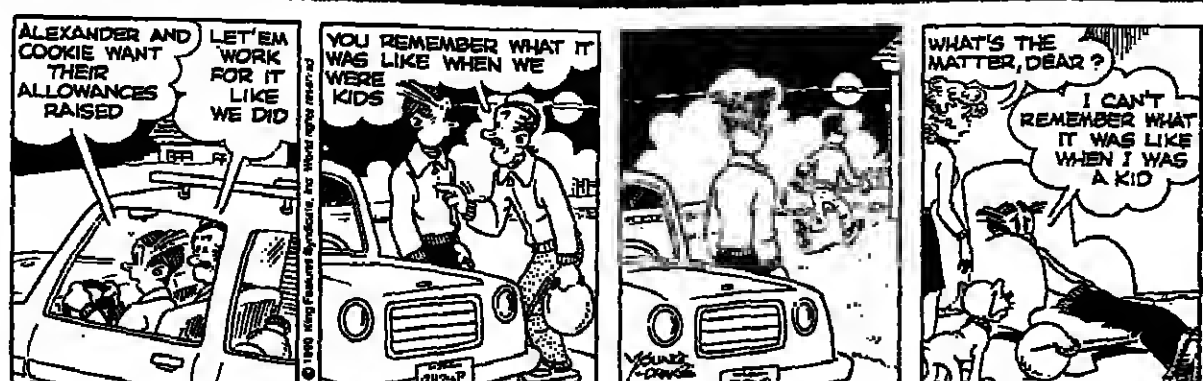
Exiled from the catwalks after a much-publicised falling out with West German designer Karl Lagerfeld last July, she continued to star in Chanel's advertising campaigns. But her days were clearly numbered and a fashion house spokeswoman confirmed on Thursday the model had quit Chanel for good.



Left: Model wearing a chiffon evening dress; (top right), a Valentino model wears a white dress with sheer flower-patterned bodice; (bottom), a model previews this poncho jacket in stripes worn over a black lace skirt. (Reuter wirephoto)



BLONDIE By Dean Young & Stan Drake



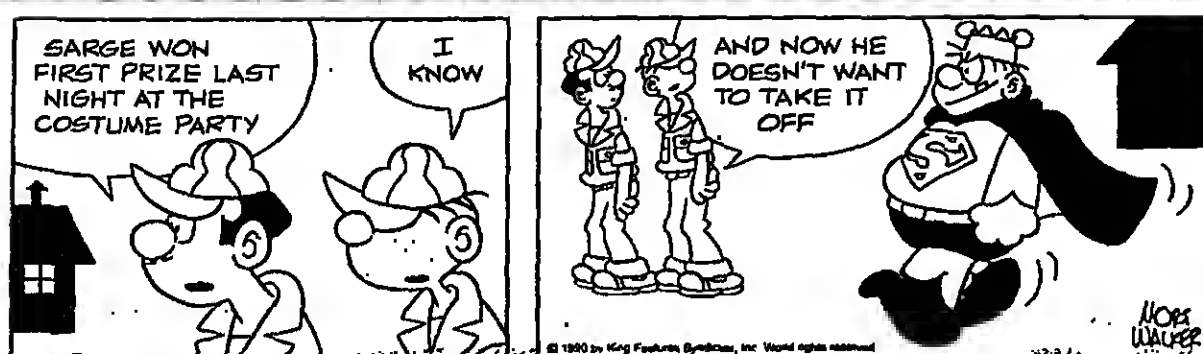
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE By Dan Brown



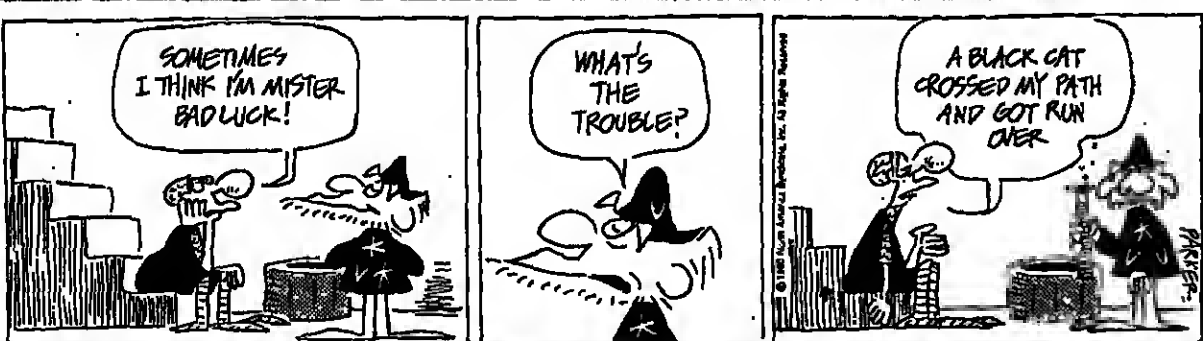
AGATHA CRUMM By Dan Brown



BEETLEBAILEY By Dan Brown



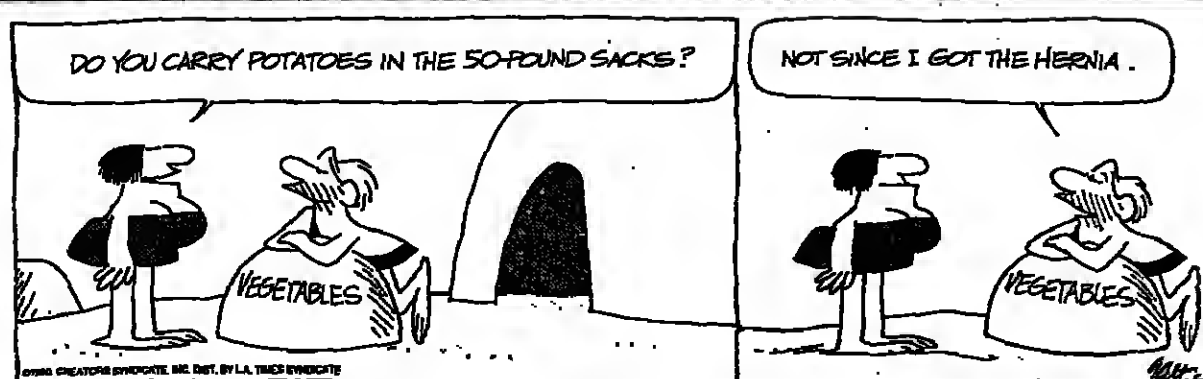
THE WIZARD OF ID By Brad Parker & Johnny Hart



ANDY CAPP By Dan Brown



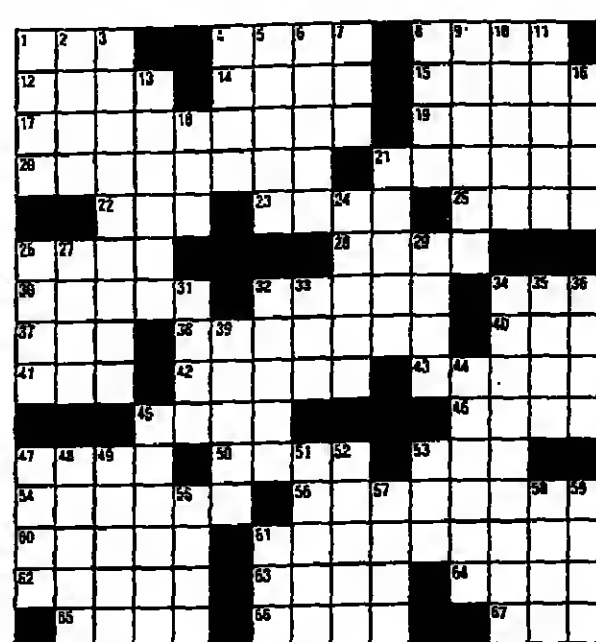
B.C. By Johnny Hart



HE-MAN By Dan Brown



TODAY'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Bounder
4 Hot rods
8 Bus, ebb.
12 Corrida cries
14 Inter—
15 Graph or map
17 Diner's portion?
19 Critic, at times
20 Fugitives
21 Attitude?
22 Baseball stat.
23 Leningrad's river
25 Gaelic
26 Steinback character
28 Eager
30 "Tiny Alice" playwright
32 Spring bloomer
34 Scheduled
37 Links item
38 Cleaner's targets?
40 Hoffmann's initials
41 Parisian possessive
42 Egg-white glaze
43 Bid
45 Droplet
46 Red-ink item
47 Wings
50 Bears or Giants
53 "Le coq"—Rimsky-Korsakov opera
54 Celebrity?
56 Auto safety device
60 Webber and Rice musical
61 Wrinkles?
62 Fathers
63 Brittany export
64 Kelt of the comics

DOWN
5 Dispatched
6 Gilbert & Sullivan princess et al.
67 Patriotic org.
1 Intelligence concern
2 Pub orders
3 Journalists?
4 Stalagmite locale
5 Foreign
6 Washer cycle
7 Droop
8 Big building lot
9 Molded
10 Relish
11 Lock
13 "South Pacific" sailor
16 Pine, e.g.
18 Troy, NY campus
21 Ship's crane
24 Courage
26 Mara's morsels
27 Whimsical
29 —facto
31 Brink
32 Hebrew letter
33 News org.
34 Rangers' places?
35 Western Indians
36 Corn holders
39 Make jubilant
44 Plants of more than one region
45 Like some eggs
47 Lemon additives
48 Popular denims
49 Burning
51 Before
52 Capital of Hejaz
53 JFK's predecessor
55 Spar
57 War god
58 Brittle
59 Ivan or Boris
61 Sixth century date: Rom.

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ASHES ARCH MEIR
DESK ORDEALS
CARAT ORA
DOLITES AYSMAL
GRASSLAND DUELS
RACK LYRE ERGOT
ELKS ASIAN NEATS

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
THE CASE OF THE VANISHING TRICK

Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ 5
♥ 83
♦ QJ842
♣ AK872

WEST
♠ KJ
♥ KQ752
♦ K3
♣ J943

EAST
♠ Q9742
♥ J1064
♦ A5
♣ 106

SOUTH
♠ A10863
♥ A9
♦ 10976
♣ Q5

The bidding:
West North East South
1♥ 2NT 3♥ 5♥
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of

This is a theme we've used before, but it never ceases to amaze us how an apparently certain trick can be made to vanish into thin air. How would you play five diamonds after the lead of the king of hearts?

North's jump to two no trump was "unusual"—a takeout for the minor suits. With working controls in the major suits, a key queen in one of partner's suits and four-card support in the other, South's leap to five diamonds was fully justified.

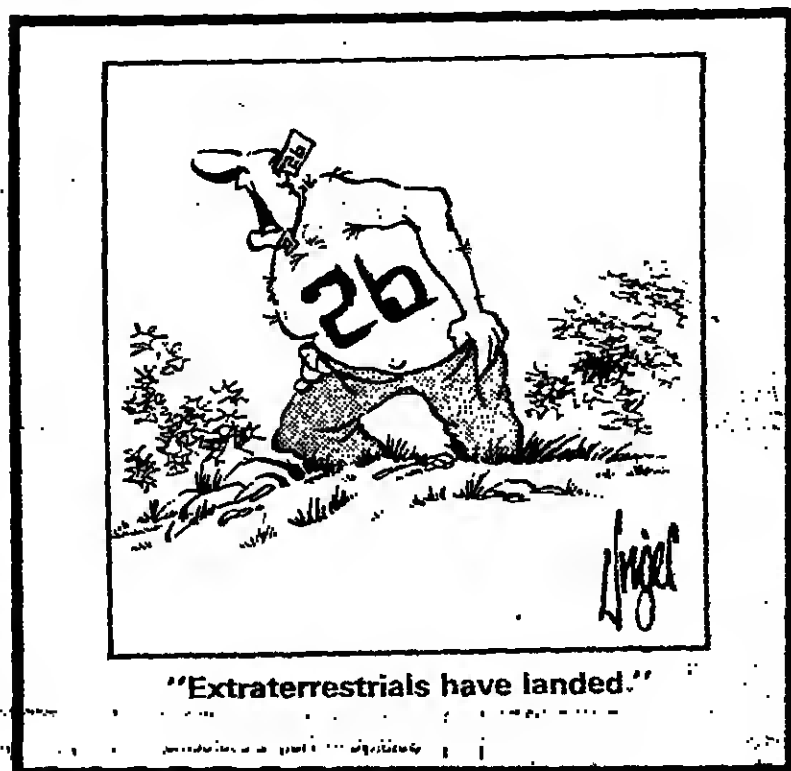
West led the king of hearts, and it might seem that declarer cannot avoid losing two trump tricks and a heart. But don't throw in the towel just yet.

Cash the queen of clubs, cross to the king and lead the ace. If East does not ruff, or ruffs high, discard your heart loser and you will lose only two trump tricks. Therefore, East must ruff low. You overruff, cash the ace of spades and ruff a spade in dummy. Now ruff a club in hand, setting up a long club.

Return to the board with a spade ruff (West can't ruff high in front of dummy because you will shed its heart loser) and lead the good club. Again, East cannot ruff. This time, however, you discard your heart loser as West ruffs with a low trump.

You ruff West's heart return and lead a trump, and great is the fall thereon. The ace and king of trumps crash on the same trick and the contract rolls home.

There was nothing miraculous about this. Your contract makes any time that clubs are 3-3, when either defender has a singleton trump honor and only two clubs, or when the cards lie as in the diagram. And there is no other way to play the hand.



YOUR STARS



You will feel more confident than you have been of late but there is no reason for smugness. You should think a little about your present situation. Do not postpone what should be done now. Be fair.



Make sure you do not try to run before you can walk. You will not be able to do all you would like to do. Instead concentrate on doing what you know can be done. Be truthful.



Something that has been causing difficulties will now become a great deal easier. However, there is still a lot to learn and you should not try to avoid doing so. Make sure you stick to limits of speed and of safety. Be tactful.



You will be in a better frame of mind but you must beware of acting on impulse or on the spur of the moment. You should allow others to have their say without interrupting. Do not place too much reliance on intuition, more on reason.



Something you started on some time ago will now begin to show good results. Everything is taking just that much longer, but you are slowly getting there. Do not rely too much on others, more on yourself. Be sincere.



You will be tempted to eat more than you know is good for you; resist. You should not say one thing and then do another. Do all you can to avoid tension and to relax. Be hopeful.



You will be able to take the initiative but you should not act on impulse. Your lucky numbers are 14 and 39. A temptation to spend more than you know you can afford should be resisted. You would do well to show just a little more goodwill towards others.



You will not be in the best of moods and should do all you can to avoid getting into an argument. There is plenty to do and you should just get on with it. However, do try to find a little time for your leisure pursuits. Be on your guard.



You may well have some good luck but do not rely on it to get you out of trouble. And do not spend more than you can readily afford. Consider the negative factors as well as the positive ones. Be generous.



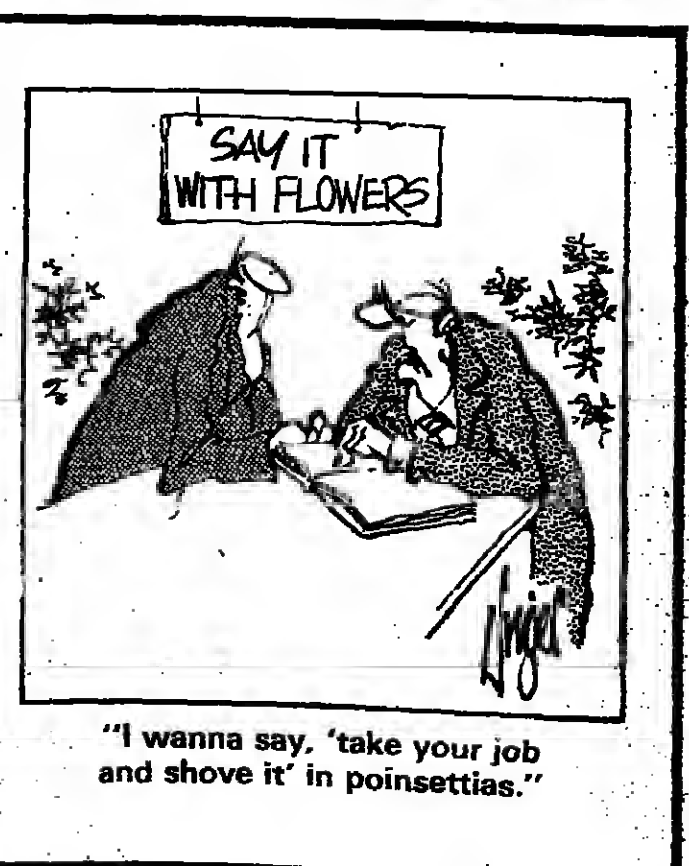
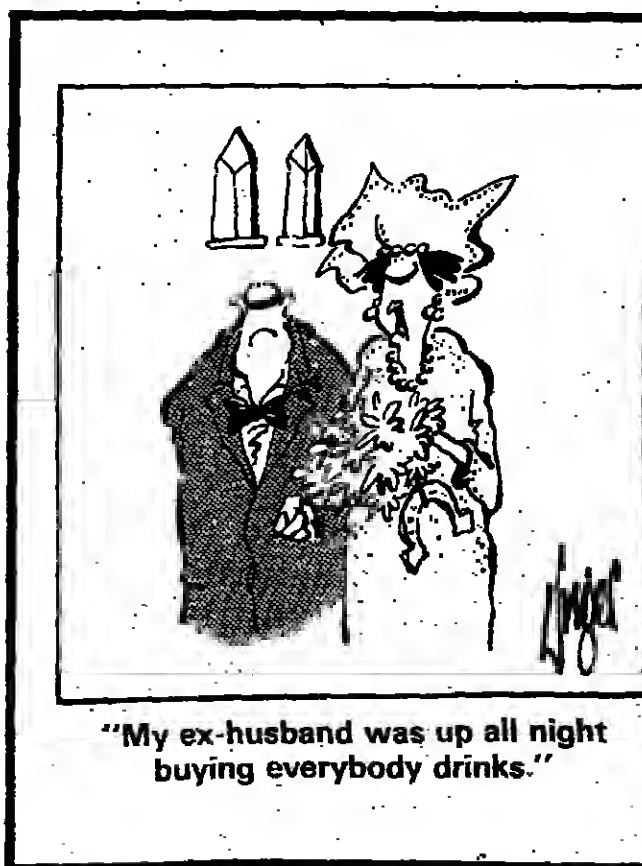
If you do not know do not try to bluff others into thinking that you do. You should do all you can not to allow your emotions to get out of hand or to repress them. Use just a little more common sense. Be tolerant.



A friend will appreciate hearing from you either by phone or by letter. The solution to a problem will be elsewhere than you were looking for it, but you will now find it. Be more patient.



You will be able to make better progress than you had thought possible. Make sure you do not do anything that you know would be to break the law. Do not take everything quite literally but do not be too sceptical either. Be selective.



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E. Germans open gates for sports transfers abroad

EAST BERLIN, Jan 19. (Reuters) East Germany opened the door yesterday for its world-beating sportsmen and women to transfer to other countries and sign temporary professional contracts abroad.

The ruling DTSB sports federation, outlining rules for such transfers, said a key condi-

tion would be that sports stars got the permission of their individual associations before joining foreign clubs.

"The temporary employment of East German sportsmen and women in other countries is possible," the DTSB said in a four-point statement published by ADN news agency.

No firm decision has yet been taken on how to split transfer fees but the finance ministry and DTSB are working on regulations.

"For those sportsmen and women who reach deals without the permission of their sports associations will forfeit all state

support in East Germany," the DTSB warned.

Then-DTSB president Klaus Eichler said last November that the federation was considering allowing transfers for players reaching the end of their careers.

Yesterday's statement made no reference to age limits.

But it said it was up to each

individual sport association to set its own conditions and negotiate with foreign clubs and international federations.

Some sports stars had already transferred abroad even before the formal regulations were unveiled.

Dynamo Berlin striker Andreas Thom was the first East

German soccer player to transfer abroad.

He joined West Germany's Bayer Leverkusen on January 1 for an undisclosed sum, part of which was donated to prop up the crumbling East German health service.

At least two cyclists are joining an Italian professional club.

Montana enjoying best year of career

NEW YORK, Jan 19. (Reuters) San Francisco 49er quarterback Joe Montana, his reservations for the football Hall of Fame already confirmed, is on a fast track to sports immortality.

Montana secured his place in football history last year when he led the 49ers to their third Super Bowl championship of the decade with a sensational last-minute victory over the Cincinnati Bengals.

When the decade's end spawned a plethora of polls, one name appeared atop virtually all the football lists — Joe Montana.

If the twice Super Bowl Most Valuable Player continues to perform in the 1990s at the level he has displayed of late, Montana will ascend to the lofty heights reserved for the likes of Babe Ruth, Wilt Chamberlain and Muhammad Ali as one of the great sports figures of all time.

Three years after major back surgery and in his 11th season, the 33-year-old Montana has enjoyed the best year of his career, culminating in a pair of magnificent post-season performances.

Montana is now poised once again to take centre stage at the National Football League's big show.

After last year's Super Bowl, Cincinnati receiver Chris Collinsworth said: "Joe Montana is not human. I don't want to call him a god but he's definitely someone who is better."

After this year's playoffs Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen went even further. "They've got God for a quarterback," said Bowlen, whose team must face the 49ers in Super Bowl XXXIV in New Orleans on January 28.

In their playoff opener, Montana left the fearsome Minnesota Vikings defence reeling, beaten and demoralised by halftime after he connected on four touchdown strikes in the first 30 minutes. The 49ers crushed the Vikings 41-13.

Montana threw another near perfect game as he led San Francisco to a 30-3 win over the Los Angeles Rams in last Sunday's National Football Conference championship.

He dissected the Rams defence with the precision of a surgeon as he completed a remarkable 26 of 30 passes — and two of the incompletions were deliberately thrown away to stop the clock — for 262 yards.

His mind-boggling 77 per cent completion rate set an NFL championship record and two touchdowns passes gave Montana the post-season record of 31, surpassing Terry Bradshaw's 30.

The great Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback of the 1970s will probably be forced to surrender or share the rest of his post-season records with Montana, who is one victory away from equalling Bradshaw's four Super Bowl wins.

In guiding the 49ers to a League best 14-2 record, the NFL's top-rated quarterback's regular season statistics were almost as impressive.

He completed a league-leading 70.2 per cent of his passes, just missing the NFL record of 70.5 set in 1982 by Cincinnati's Ken Anderson who went on to lose Super Bowl XVI to Montana's 49ers.

However, it is not natural physical ability that places Montana above his peers. Philadelphia's Randall Cunningham is far more fleet of foot and Montana does not have the rocket arm of Denver's John Elway or the lightning release of Miami's Dan Marino.

Perhaps geography holds the key to Montana's greatness. He comes from western Pennsylvania, a region of the United States where they take their football seriously and superb quarterbacks seem to be a natural resource. Former greats such as Joe Namath and Johnny Unitas and current stars Marino and Buffalo's Jim Kelly all hail from the region.

Whether it is instinct, a sixth sense or some other intangible leadership quality, Montana inspires awe in team mates and opponents alike.

His team mates say the confidence Montana exudes in the huddle is contagious, that the man does not know the meaning of the word panic.

He rarely makes a big mistake in regular games — Montana threw a mere eight interceptions this season — and he never seems to make a mistake in the big ones — he has never thrown an interception in the Super Bowl.

True he is surrounded by tremendous talent and a brilliant coaching staff, but Montana's ability to read opposing defences in unrivalled and when the game is on the line he always seems to find a way to get the job done.

"The point he shows is amazing. He keeps getting better and better. I have found myself kind of staring in awe," San Francisco coach George Seifert admitted.

The slightly-built, blue-eyed miracle man's record of last minute heroics is legendary, leaving his team and fans feeling that no deficit is too great to overcome.

Most football fans remember Montana's last-second touchdown pass to Dwight Clark in the 1981 NFC championship against Dallas. The play, simply referred to as "the catch," ever since, put San Francisco in their first Super Bowl.

Spurs hold Forest to draw

Three sent off in Cup quarterfinals

LONDON, Jan 19. (Reuters) Three players were sent off as the three English League Cup soccer quarterfinals ended in contrasting draws on Wednesday.

Sunderland captain Gary Bennett and Coventry midfielder David Speedie were dismissed for fighting midway through the second half as their pulsating tie ended goalless.

And West Ham midfielder Martin Allen received his marching orders for an ugly two-footed tackle during his side's clash with Derby which ended 1-1.

Holders Nottingham Forest were also taken to a replay. Tottenham's Steve Sedgley saving his side with a goal 10 minutes from time which earned the Londoners a 2-2 draw.

Everton scrambled into the fourth round of the Football Association (FA) cup when Norman Whiteside scored two minutes from time to secure their 1-0 win over Middlesbrough in a third round replay.

The former Manchester United midfielder, who scored both goals in Everton's 2-2 draw at Southampton on Saturday, turned the ball home following a goalmouth scramble after substitutes Tony Cottee and Raymond Attewell had both gone close.

Tottenham's Norwegian goalkeeper Erik Thorstved handed Forest their opening goal when he failed to hold a cross and Gary Crosby drove the ball home in the 35th minute.

Forest looked to have booked their place in the last four 11 minutes after the interval when Garry Parker made it 2-0 but Spurs hit back when England striker Gary Lineker netted his



Lineker: score for Spurs



McGrath: to miss match

15th goal of the season on the hour and Sedgley found the target with a raking drive from 20 metres.

Second Division West Ham went ahead through Julian Dicks in the 38th minute but their First Division opponents hit back 12 minutes from time when Welsh international Dean Saunders intercepted Tony Gale's poor back pass to ensure a replay.

Southampton have promised a high-scoring showdown for

tomorrow against an Aston Villa eager to take over at the top of the English Soccer League hit by their first mini injury crisis of the season.

Villa, behind Liverpool on goal difference at the top of the First Division but with a game in hand, are likely to be without key central defender Paul McGrath, suffering from a knee injury, and winger Tony Daley who has a troublesome shoulder.

The last thing we want is a

backlog of injuries if we are to hope to stay in contention," said Villa manager Graham Taylor yesterday. "But it will challenge the strength of the squad."

Liverpool have an easier tie at Crystal Palace, unbeaten in four games but still reeling from the memory of their nightmarish 9-0 defeat at Anfield in September, so the pressure will be on Villa to pull out all the stops at the top.

"Champions' Arsenal, four points off the leaders, are at

home to Tottenham seeking revenge for their defeat in the North London derby at White Hart Lane earlier in the season.

With the second-best goal scoring rate in the division after Liverpool and just one defeat in their last nine games, Southampton are quietly confident even though Villa have dropped only eight points out of 45 League games.

"We feel we can score goals against anybody and, as we showed against Swindon, the set-up here is geared to keep going," said midfielder Jimmy Case after his team came back from 2-0 down to beat Swindon in the League Cup this week.

The 35-year-old veteran, winner of four League titles and a cluster of European medals while at his peak with Liverpool, declares his chances of adding to his collection have never been better since he left Anfield more than eight years ago.

"There are different fortunes in this game and they can change just like the wind. Nobody's too far away yet," he said.

Although the unfashionable club is fourth, eight points behind Villa and Liverpool but with a game in hand, Southampton have something of a reputation for dramatic results.

"They all refuse to lie down and accept defeat, and when players know there are goals in the team it makes the vital difference," said manager Chris Nicholl.

Strikers Rodney Wallace, Matthew Le Tissier and Paul Rideout have now taken their joint tally to 41 goals this season, 22 of which have come in Southampton's last 12 matches.



Ven Basten: scored three on Wednesday

Maradona worried by AC Milan's form

EUROPEAN champions AC Milan, who beat Atalanta 3-1 with a Marco van Basten hat-trick on Wednesday, are worrying even Diego Maradona as they edge up the Italian Soccer League.

"Milan is the team to beat. Three goals against Atalanta? That wasn't easy. They keep storming through, and that worries me," the Argentine World Cup captain said after helping leaders Napoli to a tight 1-0 victory at home to Cesena.

Fourth-placed AC Milan have the chance to further close the gap on Napoli — at present three points although with a game in hand — when they face relegation haunted Udinese tomorrow.

But Napoli, seeking their second First Division title, are expected to take both points at home against bottom side Verona.

European Footballer of the Year Van Basten said of his three goals: "They were all beautiful. First because they make your team win and second because you scored them."

Playing despite a badly-hurt knee, Maradona set up the goal against Cesena and was praised by coach Alberto Bigon.

"Maradona performed his usual miracle and played with incredible self-sacrifice," Bigon said.

The Argentine said the match showed that Napoli were "on the right road." Napoli have been criticised for poor performances of late and their lead was cut from four points to one before Wednesday night's matches.

Sampdoria and Internazionale, both two points behind, clash in Milan in tomorrow's biggest looking to stay hot on Napoli's heels.

Inter trainer Giovanni Trapattoni put on a brave face after a poor 0-0 draw at lowly Lecce saw the champions slip back to third place on goal difference.

"It's a useful result, and we're still in the race for the title," he said.

Sampdoria's Vujadin Boskov sounded more confident after his side's 2-0 victory over Ascoli. "We're calm. We'll fight for two points (victory or a draw) while the home team fight only for two points."

In Spain, Atletico Madrid and Barcelona, six points adrift of leaders Real Madrid and locked in a struggle for second place, are at home this weekend.

Atletico will be without Portuguese striker Paulo Futre, suspended for one game after a fourth booking, against Valencia, while the visitors will be looking to leap back into second place after a 1-0 defeat at Logrones tomorrow.

Barcelona should find the going easier against Valladolid, despite missing suspended midfielder Luis Milla and having to recover from a Spanish Cup quarterfinal at Real Sociedad on Wednesday night — a narrow 1-0 victory.

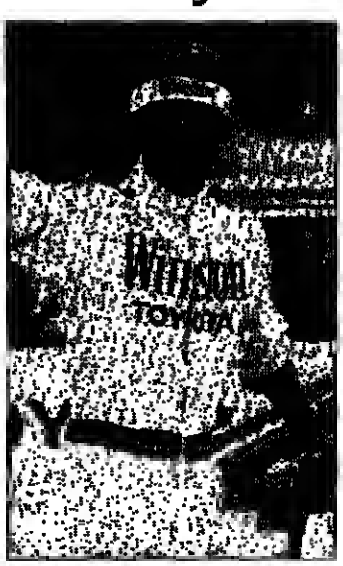
Real Madrid visit sporting Gijon expecting to improve on the 1-0 win in Oviedo last Saturday. With defender Fernando Hierro serving a one-match suspension Miguel Tendillo, who played and Miguel Chendo, recovered from injury, is also expected to play.

The Dutch League resumes this weekend after the mid-season break with PSV Eindhoven top and expecting to increase their one-point lead at second from bottom Den Bosch.

PSV have been strengthened by the return of Gerald Vanenburg and Flemming Povlsen after long-term knee injuries. But Povlsen's recall has upset Dutch international striker Wim Kieft, relegated to the bench for Wednesday night's cup tie with Feyenoord which PSV won 2-1.

Second placed Ajax's home game with Den Haag was postponed because the Dutch railway police did not have enough officers available to supervise the large contingent of Den Haag fans expected in Amsterdam.

Sulayem aims for flying start in Qatar



Bin Sulayem

MOHAMMED BIN SULAYEM is aiming for a flying start to the 1990 Fisa Middle East Championship, with his sights set firmly on victory in next month's NBK Qatar International Rally.

Driving his Winston Toyota Celica GT-4 in partnership with experienced Irish navigator Ronan Morgan, the UAE star enters the new season on February 15 full of optimism that he will capture the regional crown for the fourth successive year.

"My car, which was virtually brand new last year, has improved steadily and gives me a lot of confidence," he says.

"Obviously, it will be difficult to win in Qatar where there are now so many talented drivers. But my chances are good and I will certainly not be aiming for anything less than first place."

"Of course, with five more rounds to follow, the championship demands a number of consistent performances before anyone can start thinking of the title."

"But it is always good to win the first event of the new season to give yourself a big boost in confidence and let all the other drivers know that you are the one to catch."

Fisa's decision to abandon last year's championship following the cancellation of the rounds in Jordan, Oman and Lebanon denied Sulayem a fourth successive regional crown.

But victory in Kuwait and second place behind former world champion Bjorn Waldegard of Sweden in the Emirates International Rally once again confirmed his stature as the Arab world's leading driver.

Beginning the new season as defending champion again, the Winston Toyota star knows there are a pack of eager challengers hoping to snatch away his crown.

"The performance of young drivers like Nasser Al Attiya last year showed that there is a lot of talent emerging in the Middle East to threaten the established competitors," says Sulayem. "This is good for the sport, and it keeps me on my toes."

"I'm sure we are heading for an exciting season in the Middle East. A few surprise results would be healthy for rallying in this part of the world — but I hope there aren't too many surprises. I am very proud to be the Middle East champion and I want to keep the title for a few more years yet."

Johnson charged

BEAMSVILLE, Ontario, Jan 19. (Reuters) Disgraced Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson escaped injury in a minor car accident but was charged with failing to provide proof of insurance, police reported.

Police charged the other driver involved in the collision on Wednesday with pulling away from a parked position without making safety checks.

Johnson, 28, is serving a two-year suspension imposed by the international amateur athletics federation for using banned anabolic steroids. He was stripped of his gold medal after winning the 100 metres sprint at the 1988 Seoul

Moorhouse aims to slash half second off world record

AUCKLAND, Jan 19. (Reuters) Olympic champion Adrian Moorhouse has set himself the huge task of slashing half a second off his world 100 metres breaststroke record at the Commonwealth Games.

"I can go under 61 (seconds)," the Englishman declared yesterday. "I will be aiming for the record."

Moorhouse, attempting to match Australian freestyle Mike Wenden's feat of winning a gold medal at three successive Commonwealth Games, set the current world record of one minute 1.49 seconds at the European Championships in Bonn last August.

"I want to win the gold medal," added Moorhouse, who was beaten into second place by Canadian Victory Davis at the 1986 Commonwealth Games but took 200 metres gold.

"If I can do it with a record, so much the better."

Moorhouse, 25, sees team-mate Nick Gillingham, Olympic silver medalist over 200 metres, as his main rival and coach Terry Denison was confident that the pair would help the England swimmers to better their Edinburgh medal tally of 22.

"That is our major target," said Denison who dreams that his mature team can end the traditional Australian and Canadian domination in the pool at the Games.

On the women's side several older swimmers are making their comebacks. In Auckland, Sharron Davies, twice a Com-



Canadian gymnast Janel Morin flies on the uneven bar during her practice session for the Commonwealth Games. (Reuters wirephoto)

monwealth gold medalist, retired in disillusionment after the 1980 Moscow Olympics but is back at the age of 27 and June Croft, 26, is racing again after a six-year absence.

Maggie Hohmann, who as Maggie Kelly, won a silver and a bronze in the 1978 Commonwealth Games, made her comeback at the Seoul Olympics and is swimming her at the age of 33.

"It is good for the sport that

the older swimmers are coming back or staying in the sport and it proves that it is not just a teenage sport," said Denison.

Davies, who will be taking part in five events, said the break had done her good.

"I feel wiser and realise I am lucky to be in a position to come back," she said. "I just feel as if I am in the right place again."

Kenyan sprinters could rival their world-beating middle distance compatriots in the next few



Gates security and police check motorists entering the athletes village as security is stepped up prior to the start of the Commonwealth Games. (Reuters wirephoto)

years, according to their Commonwealth Games sprint coach John Anzrah.

"In the next few years I can see our sprinting coming up to world level," Anzrah said today.

"Anyone in Kenya can win a medal in any meeting at any time."

Anzrah said Nairobi now had a modern gymnasium where athletes could undergo the technically demanding strength and flexibility training needed to

compete at the highest level.

"There is no gym in Africa like that one," he said.

Anzrah said the unseasonably cold weather in Auckland had not worried the sprinters.

"If it's cold, no problem," he said. "I expect the boys to run good times. It's the wind that bothers us."

"We are not aiming for anything but to run in the final. Anyone in the final could get a medal."

Kenya have picked Kennedy Ondiek and Joseph Gikonyo for the men's 100 and 200 metres.

Team captain Simon Kipkemboi heads the 4x400 metres relay team while Elizabeth Onyambu is the sole woman sprinter selected.

Onyambu, who competed over 1,500 and 3,000 metres as a junior, will take part in the 100 and 200 metres in the Games athletics programme which starts on January 27.

E. Germans to probe doping confession

AMSTERDAM, Jan 19. (Reuters) The East German Skating Federation said yesterday it would investigate claims that its former world champion speed skater Karin Kania had reportedly admitted taking banned stimulants.

"Kania is reported to have said that she doped herself in some way or other," skating federation secretary Horst Briesemanster told Reuters by telephone from the northern Dutch town of Heerenveen, where the European championships will be held this weekend.

He said he believed the reports featuring Kania's confession had been broadcast on the French-language satellite channel TV-5. A transcript of the broadcast was not immediately available.

Discuss

"We'll have to get hold of a copy of the report on Monday when we're back home and discuss it with Karin," he said.

"However it all surprises me as she came through numerous dope tests during her career," he added.

Kania, formerly Karin Enke, dominated speed skating throughout the 80s after switching from figure skating, chalking up a total of 10 world titles.

She retired two weeks ago after winning two silvers and a bronze at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary to add to the two golds and two silvers she won four years previously in Sarajevo.

Lendl struggles at Australian Open

McEnroe brushes aside Goldie



Tatum O'Neal enjoys a drink while watching McEnroe play. (Reuters wirephoto)

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 19. (Reuters) John McEnroe stayed calm in testing conditions to beat fellow American Dan Goldie today as he maintained his disciplined push towards his first Grand Slam title for five years.

The three-times Wimbledon champion overwhelmed Goldie 6-3 6-2 6-2 to move into the last 16 of the Australian Open but was more impressed with the way he ignored noisy spectators and the heat than with his actual form.

"I felt like I did a good job keeping my cool," said McEnroe, who was irritated by shouts from the crowd before and during points.

A lot of people were yelling but I just told myself that my opponent was getting just as annoyed as I was. I was pleased I was able to keep my concentration in awkward circumstances.

World number one Ivan Lendl lost the second set, and nearly the third, against fellow Czechoslovak Karel Novacek before changing racquets and overpowering his rival 6-4 3-6 6-4 6-1.

Lendl's opposite number in the women's game, Steffi Graf, hit herself on the head with her racket early in her third round match against Leila Meskhi.

The mishit forehead led the defending champion to drop her serve and fall 3-1 behind but she recovered to win 6-4 6-1.

Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia, seeded fifth, lost 1-6 7-6 6-4 to American Patty Fendick and 11th-seeded American Pam Shriver became the fourth women's seed to be ousted when she was beaten by Japan's Kimiko Date 6-4 6-3.

Wearing a lime-green bandana and with white zinc cream smeared over his nose and mouth to counter the hot sun, McEnroe admitted he was prepared to look stupid if it helped him win the tournament.

"People are more aware that it's important to look bad and feel good," he joked, adding the players who best conserved their energy in the early rounds would have the best chance of success

later. "There's never a situation where you can waste energy in this weather."

Reviewing his form so far, McEnroe repeated his belief that his infamous temper was finally under control.

"Yes, I'd say this is the best I've concentrated in a Grand Slam tournament for some time but that's not saying a lot. It really bothers me when I get negative — it's so much more enjoyable and obviously I play better."

At one point in the second set a spectator shouted out "C'mon Dan, make him angry," to the frustrated Goldie. McEnroe remained impassive but wife Tatum to the stand smiled broadly.

Having dropped only 15 games in three matches on centre court, McEnroe confessed his mind had occasionally drifted towards the final on Sunday week.

"When you've tasted success it's hard not to think about it. I haven't won one in five years but it's one of those catch 22 situations — you don't want to think about it too much."

Lendl lost his timing for 30 minutes in his centre court match against Novacek, especially on his backhand. Novacek broke Lendl's serve three times in the third set but his own serve let him down and Lendl, who lost just two sets on the way to the 1989 title, was able to escape.

The US based Czechoslovak will now play Simona Yul of Australia who scored a career-best victory, beating 15th seed Thomas Muster, a 1989 semifinalist, 3-6 6-4 6-3 6-2.

Fendick, seeded 12th here last year, was delighted with her 1-6 7-6 7-5 victory which capped a brave comeback from a disappointing 1989.

Clutching an ice pack to her right shoulder, which has been troubling her since March, Fendick said: "This week is the first week that things have started to come together again."

The American recovered from 4-0 down in the second set. "At that stage you think it's either time to play or go home."

Another Czechoslovak seed, Helena Sukova, last year's losing finalist, was made to struggle by Sarah Loosmore but a spate of double faults on crucial points let the Briton down. Sukova won.

Results

Third round results in the Australian Open tennis championships on Friday (prefix number denotes seeding): 1-Steffi Graf (West Germany) beat Leila Meskhi (Soviet Union) 6-4 6-1; 13-Raffaella Reggi (Italy) beat Anke Huber (West Germany) 7-3 4-6; Simona Yul (Australia) beat 15-Thomas Muster (Austria) 3-6 6-4 6-3 6-2; Patty Fendick (US) beat 5-Jana Novotna (Czechoslovakia) 1-6 7-6 (7-5) 6-4; Kimoko Date (Japan) beat 11-Pam Shriver (US) 6-4 6-3 16-Barbara Paulus (Austria) beat Elizabeth Smylie (Australia) 6-4 6-3; Pete Sampras (US) beat Todd Woodbridge (Australia) 7-3 6-4 6-2; 9-Andre Geeser (Switzerland) beat Michael Stich (West Germany) 6-4 6-3 6-7 (7/6) 7-5; 1-Ivan Lendl (Czechoslovakia) beat Karel Novacek (Czechoslovakia) 6-4 3-6 6-1; 12-Steffi Graf (West Germany) beat Gladi Boon (Israel) 6-3 6-3 6-3; Andrei Cherkasov (Soviet Union) beat Jean-Francois (France) 6-4 6-4 7-5; 9-Katerina Maleeva (Bulgaria) beat Nicole Pietrangeli (Netherlands) 6-4 6-4; 4-Helena Sukova (Czechoslovakia) beat Sarah Loosmore (Britain) 6-3 4-6 6-3; 4-John McEnroe (US) beat Dan Goldie (US) 6-3 6-2 6-2; 1-Nash McQuinn (Australia) beat 8-Johan Krieger (Canada) 6-2 7-6 (7/4).



Lendl reacts after losing a point. (Reuters wirephoto)

Becker ready to take drugs to stay at top

BONN, Jan 19. (Reuters) Wimbledon champion Boris Becker said today he would be prepared to take performance-enhancing drugs if other top tennis players took them and if doping was necessary to stay at the top.

The world number two, presently competing in the Australian Open in Melbourne, said in an interview with the West German magazine Sports that, while tennis was clean, he understood why many athletes in other sports resorted to doping.

"If Lendl kept beating me because he was taking steroids, I would take them too, I mean that," Becker was quoted as saying.

"I would try to make sure we were competing on an equal basis. That's what it's all about. Otherwise I would just pack it all in straight away."

Becker, whose statements are certain to disappoint officials and athletes trying to rid their sports of doping, said drugs were not a problem to tennis because players need a variety of qualities including strength, stamina, speed, and mobility.

"There would be doping perhaps if you could take something for your mental strength," the 22-year-old West German said.

"Something that made you harder. When it's about being mentally stronger than your opponent, not physically. There is no drug for that."

Becker said at least 90 per cent of the many track and field athletes he knew took drugs and he understood why.

"We live in 1990 and every sport is all about money — that's a fact," he told Sports.

Edberg gets birthday cake

MELBOURNE, Jan 19. (Reuters) Stefan Edberg of Sweden received a surprise birthday cake from the organisers of the Australian Open Tennis Championships on his 24th birthday today.

Edberg, whose birthday normally falls during the first Grand Slam of the season, was led unwillingly into the press centre where he was told a surprise awaited him.

The two-times Open champion appeared relieved that he was expected to do no more than blow out 24 candles and ham it up for the cameras.

"Is that your favourite surface?" a journalist asked as Edberg cut into the huge red sponge cake.

Earlier Edberg and Australia's Pat Cash, another former Wimbledon champion, won through to the third round of the men's doubles with a 7-6 3-6 6-4 defeat of Czechoslovak pair Petr Korda and Cyril Suk.

French domination under scrutiny

LONDON, Jan 19. (Reuters) France's domination of European rugby union in the last decade comes under scrutiny when the first Five Nations Championship of the 1990s begins tomorrow.

An exceptionally gifted generation of players helped France win the title outright three times — twice completing the Grand Slam — and a share in it on another three occasions.

Attempting to end the hegemony of the French, also runners-up in the 1987 World Cup, are English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish sides at varying stages of development.

Serge Blanco's injury-enforced absence from France's first match of the 1990s against Wales at Cardiff this weekend could be symbolic of the inevitable changes they have to face in the new decade.

French coach Jacques Fouroux said: "We are losing our 'Mister Plus' over the last 10 years of the Five Nations tournament. His absence is obviously a handicap."

France will be hoping the brilliant full-back, as well as scrum-half and captain Pierre Berbizier and centre Philippe Sella, will still be in magical form for next year's World Cup.

But their international careers could well end there while the Welsh, the dominant side of the 1970s, can only improve after a dismal last 10 years.

Wales were at their lowest ebb when they clashed with England in their last Five Nations match last season.

They managed to win 12-9, avoiding a championship whitewash for the first time and an equally unprecedented fifth consecutive international defeat.

The move to Rugby League of their biggest talent in recent years, Jonathan Davies, undermined the Welsh game and they start the 1990s without Robert Norster, their superb line-out jumper, injured on the Lions tour of Australia.

England began the previous decade by winning the Grand Slam. Then they fell away.

However, they take confidence from the fact that they could have ended the decade in a similar vein had they not lost their last match in Cardiff, finishing joint second behind France.

That side, which had beaten France 11-0 at Twickenham, can revive English Rugby Union fortunes.

England open their challenge against Ireland at Twickenham and Ireland's coach Jimmy Davidson claims the last two clashes between the countries — both English victories — were vital in the development of England's current side.

"The 1988 game at Twickenham gave England the confidence to play the running game that has produced so many tries in recent matches," Davidson said.

England scored nine tries against Romania in Bucharest in May and 10 against Fiji early this season with five coming from winger Rory Underwood.

England provided last year's Lions with the bulk of their pack but they begin the championship without two outstanding forwards, back-row men Mike Teague and Dean Richards.

The Irish, who surprised when they won the title in 1982 and 1985, are never easy to predict. Their probable side was well beaten in the recent trial.

They also have a tendency to fade over the last quarter — they lost 37-21 to Scotland last season after being 21-19 up at the break in the century match between the two countries.

But the Irish, still looking for a replacement for the gifted Ollie Campbell, are never easy to beat, their commitment and fighting spirit second to none.

"Let's say we'll be as competitive as ever," Davidson said.

Scotland, the outright winners in 1984 who also shared the title with France two years later, will this season have their toughest matches against France and England at Murrayfield, where they are hardest to beat.

They also convincingly beat Fiji and Romania late last year, running in 11 tries to the delight of coach Ian McGeechan, also the Lions coach.

The Scots, who with England were the main suppliers of the triumphant Lions, appear to have found a new star in 21-year-old winger Tooy Stanger, who ran in three tries against the Romanians. He scored two in his debut against Fiji.

"These games have been a great stepping-stone to the championship," McGeechan said.

Barkley takes 76ers to win over Pistons

PHILADELPHIA, Jan 19. (AP) Charles Barkley scored 30 points, including a rebound basket and a dunk in the final 11 seconds, giving the Philadelphia 76ers a 112-108 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

The 76ers led 86-78 early in the fourth quarter of Wednesday night's game, but the Pistons came back to tie it on three occasions, the last time at 108-108 as Bill Laimbeer's baseline jumper

with 32 seconds left. Barkley and Rick Mahorn missed shots on Philadelphia's next possession, but Barkley banked in Mahorn's miss to break the tie. Isaiah Thomas dribbled the ball out of bounds, with 5.8 seconds left and Barkley broke free for the clinching dunk in the final second.

Celtics 133, Magic 111. Robert Parrish scored 25 points and pulled down 26

rebounds as Boston made its first 25 free throws and never trailed. Larry Bird, playing in only his second game after missing four with a severe left ankle sprain, had 14 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists as the Celtics won 133-111.

Heat 121, Pacers 111. Rooy Seikaly had a career-high 31 points and rookie Sherman Douglas scored 16 of his 25 in the fourth quarter as Miami

broke an eight-game home losing streak, beating Indiana 121-111. The victory gave the Heat its third two-game winning streak.

Miami beat Washington on Monday to break an NBA-high 13-game skid. Indiana sustained its sixth consecutive road loss.

Sets 115, Bulls 108. Sam Bowie scored 11 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and grabbed 14 rebounds for New Jersey, which handed Washing-

ton its third straight loss, 115-106.

Trailing 90-89 early in the period, Bowie and Dennis Hopson keyed an 11-2 spurt that put the Nets ahead to stay 100-92.

Hopson had a 3-point goal and a basket in the spurt while Bowie had a basket and two free throws.

Results of National Basketball Association games played on Wednesday: Miami 121 Indiana 111

New Jersey 115 Washington 106
Boston 133 Orlando 111
Philadelphia 132 Detroit 108
San Antonio 102 New York 97
Phoenix 108 Dallas 88
Houston 107 Cleveland 97
Utah 95 Atlanta 88
L.A. Lakers 100 Seattle 90

Results of National Basketball Association games played yesterday: Milwaukee 115 Washington 112
Chicago 132 Golden State 107
Charlotte 110 Denver 108
Phoenix 113 Minnesota 96
L.A. Clippers 105 Seattle 95



Charlotte Hornets' centre J.R. Reid (left) watches the ball as it sails past Nuggets guard Lafayette Lever's head. (Reuters wirephoto)



Washington's Darrell Walker (centre) is pressured by Milwaukee's Jay Mumphries and Jack Sikma (right). (Reuters wirephoto)



New Jersey Nets' Jack Haley (right) grabs Washington's Mark Alarie's wrist as he goes for a layup. (Reuters wirephoto)



Detroit's Mark Aguirre (No. 23) takes a shot at the basket. (Reuters wirephoto)



Tyson runs through the Tokyo snow (left) and later gets his wrists taped by his trainer prior to a workout. (Reuters wirephoto)



Warren (right) and Marsh posing together in London July 9, 1987. (Reuters wirephoto)

Police charge Marsh

'Tyson loss would be tragedy'

LONDON, Jan 19. (AP) Former boxing champion Terry Marsh, a national hero who fought fires while staying undefeated in the ring, was charged yesterday with attempted murder in the November shooting of ex-maoeager Frank Warren.

Marsh, 31, the "Fighting Fireman" who worked as a firefighter during the day and trained at night while holding the International Boxing Federation world junior-welterweight crown, was scheduled to appear this morning before a magistrate.

Marsh, who was questioned by police for more than 32 hours before the charge was filed, also has been charged with possession of ammunition without a firearms certificate, Scotland Yard said.

Detective superintendent Jeff Rees, who has led the inquiry into the Warren shooting, said Marsh would be kept in custody at an East London police station.

Marsh's lawyer, Henri Brandman, said Wednesday the boxer "categorically denies any involvement of any nature whatsoever in respect of the matter concerning which he has been arrested."

Scotland Yard said another man, who was not named, also was being questioned in the shooting but had not been charged. The other man was arrested



Warren (right) and Marsh posing together in London July 9, 1987. (Reuters wirephoto)

Dec 19 and released on bail, then was questioned again by police on Thursday, officials said.

Scotland Yard refused to speculate on a motive for the shooting or to say if Marsh was suspected of carrying out the shooting himself.

US promoter Don King said yesterday it would be a "great tragedy" if world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson lost to James "Buster" Douglas in the Tokyo Dome Feb. 11.

King was referring to the effect on Tyson's next scheduled fight against Evander Holyfield at Trump Plaza on June 18.

"It would be a great tragedy. If

he (Tyson) loses, there is no match between Tyson and Holyfield ... if any boxer loses, the contract becomes invalid. Nobody can lose," King said as he watched Tyson's second sparring session in Japan since his arrival Tuesday.

Tyson, 23, has a 37-0 record with 33 knockouts against Douglas' 29-4-1 with 19 kos.

The World Boxing Council will oppose a bout between George Foreman and Mike Tyson if the former, champion first takes on hooed boxer Francisco Damiani of Italy, a WBC spokesman said yesterday.

WBC refuses to let Leonard step down

MEXICO CITY, Jan 19. (Reuters) The World Boxing Council (WBC) refused yesterday to let its super-middleweight title-holder Sugar Ray Leonard give up his crown.

"The WBC doesn't accept the resignation that the champion offered yesterday," Eduardo Lamazon, executive secretary of the boxing organisation, told Reuters.

"He has more than six months to defend his title and under no circumstances is the WBC going to pressure Leonard, perhaps one of the greatest champions that ever was in boxing, to do it," Lamazon said.

Leonard's lawyer Mike Trainer announced earlier in Maryland that the title-holder had told the WBC he would give up the crown because of mounting pressure on him to defend it.

A letter from Trainer to the WBC had said: "He is aware that you are under pressure by fighters in his division that want to fight for the title."

"Accordingly, he has authorised me to relinquish, on his behalf, (the) said title so that you can afford two worthy fighters the opportunity to fight for his title."

But Lamazon said Leonard, who has a 36-1-1 record, "would remain as champion for the moment until he makes a definitive statement."

Leonard won the super middleweight crown in 1988 and last month beat Panama's Roberto Duran.

Honeyghan seeks to win back crown

LONDON, Jan 19. (Reuters) Britain's Lloyd Honeyghan, who vacated his World Boxing Association (WBA) welterweight title in a protest against apartheid three years ago, will fight American Mark Breland in Loodoo on March 3 in a bid to win it back.

Between them, the two men have fought 11 world title fights and if Honeyghan succeeds, he will become the first Briton to win a world crown three times.

Promoter Jarvis Astaire described the fight as a one-million-dollar affair. "This is without question the richest one-heavyweight fight to be staged here," he said.

Honeyghan won the undisputed welterweight title from American Don Curry in a major upset in 1986 but relinquished the WBA crown in a stand against apartheid when he refused to make a mandatory defence against South African Harold Volbrecht.

The 29-year-old Briton lost the World Boxing Council (WBC) version of his title to Mexican Jorge Vaca in October 1987 but regained it in London in March 1988. He finally lost it again to American Marlo Starnog in Las Vegas last February.

Former Olympic champion Breland won the WBA title in February 1987 after it was vacated by Honeyghan, lost to Starnog later that year and then won it back after it was vacated last February.

"This is a fight that we have been looking forward to for a long, long time," said Breland's trainer Joe Fariello. "I saw Honeyghan come to as a huge underdog and beat Don Curry in Atlantic City in 1986. He fought a great fight."

Top boxer

MEXICO CITY, Jan 19. (AP) The World Boxing Council yesterday declared Julio Cesar Chavez, the super lightweight world champion, as Boxer of the Year for 1989.

The boxing council said Chavez was chosen by a vote of its executive committee.

The council also named the Sugar Ray Leonard-Tommy Hearns June 12 bout in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Fight of the Year. It ended in a draw.

Lankans draw after injury sidelines Labrooy

BENDIGO, Australia, Jan 19, (Reuters): Sri Lanka, their attempt to force victory hampered by the absence of injured pace bowler Graeme Labrooy, drew with an Australian Country XI on the third and final day of their cricket match today.

The country side were 100 for five at the close in pursuit of a

target of 172 after Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga declared his side's second innings at 175 for nine 26 minutes before tea.

Scoreboard

SRI LANKA first innings 234. (A. Samarasekera 51)
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY XI first innings 238 for nine declared (T. Oliver 58, T.

Waldron 51 not out)
SRI LANKA second innings (overnight 20 for one)
A. Samarasekera c Phillips b Nix 53
A. Gurusinha c Beaumont b Crouch 4
H. Tilakaratne c Waldron b Wrigley 8
S. Jayasuriya b Wrigley 4
A. Ranasinghe not out 54
G. Wickramasinghe c Wrigley b Nix 1
A. de Silva c Phillips b Gerhardt 11
G. Labrooy b Gerhardt 0

R. Madursasinghe c Nix b Gerhardt 0
Extras (b-6 lb-3 nb-1) 10
Total (nine wickets declared) 175
Fall of wickets: 1-4 2-31 3-62 4-76 5-123
6-125 7-171 8-178 9-175
Bowling: Crouch 15-33 37-1, Wrigley 12-2-61-3, Nix 12-4-32-2 (1nb), Gerhardt 12-2-42-3, Kelsaher 2-1-4-0
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY XI second innings
T. Oliver b. Wijegunawardene 7
G. Phillips c. Jayasuriya b. Madursasinghe 29

M. Kelsaher b W. Madursasinghe 17
S. Scuderi not out 25
A. Wiggley at Wickremasinghe b Jayasuriya 8
P. Evans b Madursasinghe 3
G. Beaumont not out 3
Extras (b-7 nb-1) 8
Total (five wickets) 100
Fall of wickets: 1-102 2-53 3-72 4-88 5-82
Bowling: Wijegunawardene 9-1-30-1 (1nb), Gurusinha 8-1-13-0, Madursasinghe 6-1-24-3, Jayasuriya 5-0-26-1
Result: match drawn.

Pakistan out for 257

Rackemann and Healy shine

ADELAIDE, Australia, Jan 19, (Reuters): Piety bowling by Australian paceman Carl Rackemann and a haul of five catches by wicketkeeper Ian Healy contributed to a Pakistan collapse on the opening day of the second cricket Test today.

Pakistan's last six wickets tumbled for 70 during the final session and they were all out for 257 in their first innings on a placid pitch.

Australia, 1-0 up in the three-match series after winning the first Test in Melbourne by 92 runs on Tuesday, were 10 without loss at the close.

Rackemann finished with four for 40 and was effectively supported by fellow pace bowlers Greg Campbell, who took three for 79, and Merv Hughes, with two for 63.

Campbell played following the withdrawal from Australia's squad of Terry Alderman with a groin injury. Hughes also had a fitness problem and received a cortisone injection in his right knee only an hour before play started.

Pakistan included recently-arrived batsmen Rameez Raja and Salim Malik and although opener Rameez made only nine and Salim fell for 11, the touring team seemed to be making a more solid start than in each innings of the previous Test.

However, after winning the toss and reaching 187 for four, they fell apart in the last session

in the face of persevering pace bowling.

Pakistan scored freely in the morning session despite losing Rameez cheaply, caught by Peter Taylor at backward square leg off Campbell with the total 27.

The first 50 runs came off 76 deliveries but the touring side were pegged back just before lunch. Rackemann had Salim

Yousuf leg before for 38 and Shoaib Mohammad was out in the same way to a slower delivery from Hughes for 43.

First Test century-maker Ejaz Ahmed and Javed Miandad combined for a 71-run fourth wicket partnership before Ejaz was caught by Geoff Marsh at mid-wicket off Allan Border's left-arm spin for 28.

Pakistan were 180 for four at tea, with Miandad on 48, but the Australians fought back after the interval, first capturing the vital wicket of Miandad for 52. The Pakistan vice-captain played a loose cut shot off Campbell and succeeded only in edging an easy catch to Healy.

Salim was out next without addition to the score, snicking a Hughes' delivery for Healy to swoop and pluck up a low catch off the bootlaces of the fieldman at first slip.

Temper flared when new batsman Wasim Akram exchanged words with Hughes after a mid-pitch collision.

Wasim and captain Imran Khan then shared a rapid 54-run partnership in which Wasim was the dominant figure. He was particularly seven on off-spinner Peter Taylor, pulling him for one massive six.

Imran was more cautious and made 13 before he was caught behind off Rackemann, who continued his fine spell and his successful partnership with Healy by having Tauseef Ahmed

caught behind without scoring.

From the next ball, Healy took his fifth catch when Mushtaq Ahmed edged Rackemann, while Campbell wrapped up the innings by having Wasim caught by Border for equal top score of 52.

Scoreboard

PAKISTAN first innings
Shoaib Mohammad b W. Hughes 43
Rameez Raja c P. Taylor b Campbell 9
Salim Yousuf b W. Rackemann 38
Javed Miandad c Healy b Campbell 52
Ejaz Ahmed c Marsh b Border 28
Salim Malik c Healy b Hughes 11
Imran Khan c Healy b Rackemann 13
Wasim Akram c Border b Rackemann 52
Tauseef Ahmed c Healy b Rackemann 0
Mushtaq Ahmed c Healy b Rackemann 0
Waqar Younis not out 1
Extras (b-4 lb-4 nb-1) 20
Total 257
Fall of wickets: 1-27 2-91 3-95 4-166 5-187 6-187 7-251 8-251 9-251
Bowling: Hughes 18-5-63-2, Campbell 21-3-79-3 (w-1 nb-1), Taylor 12-0-57-0, Rackemann 21-3-40-4, Border 4-0-10-1
AUSTRALIA first innings
G. Marsh not out 6
M. Taylor not out 3
Extras (nb-1) 1
Total (no wicket) 10
To bat: D. Boon, A. Border (captain), D. Jones, S. Waugh, I. Healy, P. Taylor, M. Hughes, G. Campbell, C. Rackemann
Bowling (today): Wasim 2-1-10-0 (nb-1) Younis 1-1-0-0



Miandad: hit 52

Best 16 selected: Bedi

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Jan 19, (Reuters): Indian cricket team manager Bishan Bedi said today the team selected to tour New Zealand was not influenced by politics but was the best available.

"Only 16 could come and the best 16 have come," Bedi told a news conference on arrival.

The omission of Ravi Shastri, Kris Srikkanth and Dilip Vengsarkar, all former Test captains, caused a storm in India.

Asked if selection was politically motivated, Bedi said: "Nothing of a sort."

Some leading players in India have been in dispute with the Indian cricket board over the level of payments.

Bedi said Vengsarkar was dropped because he opted out of India's recent tour to Pakistan. "He was mentally stale and physically faded," he said.

He blamed the omission of Srikkanth, captain for the Pakistan tour, on his failure to play local first class cricket.

Bedi said youth was the side's strength. The team

has an average age of 24 and one player, Sachin Tendulkar, is just 15-1/2.

"We have a very young, experienced team," Bedi said.

Also young is captain Mohammad Azharuddin, 26 and with just four first class games to his name as captain. He said he was surprised to have been chosen to lead the side.

"I know it's going to be a very tough appointment. But I have played under four Test captains so I know exactly what to do."

Bedi said the side is well balanced. "We have an attack which will face any challenge, a green-top or a turner."

One player who Azharuddin will be able to rely on is Kapil Dev, one of the world's best all-rounders. "My job is to help the boys," he said.

The team begins with a four-day match against the New Zealand Cricket Council's President's XI in New Plymouth on Monday. The tour includes three Test matches followed by a triangular one-day tournament with Australia.

Kuwaitis share victory

DUBAI: Britain star Michael Whitaker, who held off a big Kuwaiti challenge to clinch his second major victory at the Dubai Horse Show, tonight attempts to complete a unique hat-trick at the Middle East's premier showjumping event.

If the European Championship silver medalist claims the Grand Prix title in the climax to the four-day event, he will become the first rider to have won all three international competitions in the show's seven-year history.

Riding Flying High, the horse on which he had clinched the opening international class, Whitaker glided to a glorious clear round to win the Emirates Stakes on Thursday night at the Metropolitan Hotel showground.

The classy performance in a new event sponsored by the international airline of the UAE — the show's official carrier — kept Kuwait waiting until yesterday afternoon for its first success at the show.

When it came the victory was shared by Laura Al Sherif, oo Caravan and Hani Ibrahim oo Little One who were joint winners of the juniors' two-fence challenge.

Three other Kuwaiti combinations — Jasim Al Shaban oo Skipper, Osama Al Khadra oo Bedora and Sami Al Farh oo Seaspray — were among six joint runners-up who went out when the two fences were raised to the final height.

The result was cheered loudly by the Kuwaiti contingent who would have been celebrating victory in the Emirates Stakes the previous evening but for Whitaker's skill.

The four other riders to reach the jump-off were all Kuwaitis, and the first of them to go, Zaid Rashied, produced a flawless round on Leger Way in 36.76 secs.

That looked good enough to win until Flying High lived up to his name and took Whitaker clear in 35.70 secs. Third after another clear round in 36.92 secs was 1982 Asian Games gold medalist Nadia Al Mutawa riding her mother's horse Joost. Sister Gemila had eight faults on Kuwait Bibi to finish fifth behind Hamad Dabbous who had one fence down oo Le Brogue.

After receiving his trophy from Emirates manager, UAE, Khaled Al Khadra, a smiling Whitaker said: "I'm grateful to George Aboud from Lebanon for lending me the horse. He has a good technique for a jumper and is very careful. We have certainly got a good chance of winning again."

Rebels in S. Africa for tour

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 19, (Reuters): Rebel England cricketers led by former Test captain Mike Gatting arrived in South Africa today, unaware of airport clashes which erupted earlier between police and anti-apartheid demonstrators.

The 16-man squad landed at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts airport three hours late after a bomb threat delayed their South African Airways flight in London.

They were welcomed by Ali Bacher, managing director of the South African Cricket Union, who has masterminded the tour which defies a world ban on sporting contacts with the white-ruled republic.

As the players were ushered through the terminal, there was no sign of the anti-apartheid protests a few hours earlier.

Baton-wielding police charged a crowd of 100 anti-apartheid protesters who earlier had been allowed to approach the terminal buildings after negotiations between police and black leaders led by Winnie Mandela.

The police patrols sprayed tear gas on the crowd and set dogs on the demonstrators, who waved the flag of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) guerrilla movement and chanted slogans denouncing Pretoria's white minority rule.



Police use dogs to disperse the crowd. (Reuters wirephoto)



Protesters attempt to dissuade the rebels from leaving London for S. Africa (Reuters wirephoto)

Several people were bitten as horrified travellers looked on. Anti-apartheid leaders said about 30 demonstrators were arrested during the clash.

Reuter photographer Judd Ngenya was bitten by a police dog and detained briefly by police. He was released after

bring ordered to surrender his films.

Today's demonstration is the first sign that the seven-week rebel tour, which breaks a UN-backed sporting boycott of South Africa, will be used as a major platform of protest by the anti-apartheid movement.

Kasparov describes escape

MADRID, Jan 19, (Reuters): World chess champion Garry Kasparov says he made a movie-like escape from violence-torn Azerbaijan, spiriting away relatives on a specially-chartered plane.

"My departure was the stuff movies are made of," Kasparov told the Spanish daily El Pais in a telephone interview shortly after he arrived in Moscow from his hometown Baku on Thursday.

"Some friends managed to read a charter plane to Baku and I spirited away 60 people, including most of my relatives. I saved their lives by miracle," Kasparov, 27, a rugged man of

half-Armenian, half-Jewish origin. At least 66 people have been killed in Azerbaijan and Armenia in a week of frenzied fighting between predominantly Muslim Azeris and mostly Christian Armenians.

"Reaching the airport, with Azeri rebels trying to block all access, was quite an odyssey," Kasparov was quoted as saying.

"I didn't feel safe until I could hold my wife, who was waiting for me in Moscow, in my arms."

Asked whether the violence could have been avoided, Kasparov said: "Of course they could have."

Napoli star

MILAN, Italy, Jan 19, (Reuters): Brazil's greatest soccer player Pele wants to woo Napoli star Careca to the United States to revive public interest in the sport in the run-up to the 1994 World Cup finals there, an Italian newspaper said yesterday.

Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy's top sporting paper, said Pele had been asked by his employers Warner Bros, one of the sponsors of the finals, to start recruiting stars to play in the United States as soon as possible.

Careca, a leading striker in the present Brazilian national side, is at the top of Pele's shopping list.



The Kifco squad with other officials.

Kifco win Rothmans Cup

KIFCO held off a determined challenge from Evershire to win the Rothmans Cup cricket tournament at the KOC grounds yesterday.

Kifco, who have an unbeaten record this season, needed six runs in the last over with only one wicket in hand and they got the runs with only two balls to spare.

In a match which swung from one side's favour to the other, Evershire scored 176 in 38 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat. Kifco went past the target in the 45th over.

Kifco owe their victory to Man of the Match Nasir and Shahid Butt. After Shahid had restricted Evershire to a low score with five wickets for 45, Nasir carried his bat through the Kifco innings and remained unbeaten on 60. Evershire's Dawood bowled a tight line and length and finished with four for 35 but even he failed to stop Kifco from winning.

Evershire started their innings on a bad note, losing the first three batsmen for 33 runs. Ejaz and Shehzad tried to lift their team out of the doldrums with a stand of 43 runs but except for Dawood, who hit an unbeaten 34, none of the other batsmen stayed long at the wicket.

The other Kifco bowlers among the wickets were Aqeel with two and Rashid Ansari and Rafiq with one each. Kifco also lost their three wickets for 33 runs but Aqeel and Nasir swung the match Kifco's way with a stand of 47. A collapse saw Kifco tumble from 116 for four to 170 for nine and they were in danger of losing their first match of the season before Nasir and Shehzad Abdulla got the required runs.



Kifco captain Mansoor Khan (left) receives the Rothmans Cup from Aref Essa.



Nasir receives his prize. (Photos by Javed Basra)

The other Evershire bowlers among the wickets were Razzak with two and Rifat, Shahzad and Zahid one each.

The manager of Rothmans in Kuwait Aref Essa presented the prizes.

France beat Qadsiya in opener



The French (left) and Qadsiya captains exchange pennants.



The Qadsiya goalkeeper sees the ball roll into the goal.

THE French national soccer team started its nine-day tour of Kuwait with a 3-0 victory over Qadsiya at the Kazma Club on Thursday.

Two of France's goals came through players making their debut for the team — Remy Garde and Tahitian-born Pascal Vahirua. The third goal came through Eric Contona. The French led 1-0 at half-time.

Vahirua was outstanding on his debut and he said after the match that the Kazma stadium ground suited him as it is similar to the grounds in his hometown on the French Polynesian island of Tahiti.

He had no difficulty in adjusting to the position he was played in and combined well with the rest of the members of the squad. His goal came in the 38th minute of the match and helped his team take the lead.

Vahirua said that the only regret he had was that his parents were unable to arrive in Kuwait in time to see him score his first international goal. They are expected to be in Kuwait this evening and will most likely see their son in action tomorrow evening when France take on Kuwait at the Kazma stadium at 5.30 pm.

France will play one more international, against East Germany on Wednesday, before they wind up their Kuwait training camp.



An action shot of the match. (Photos by Ahmed Barroum)

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